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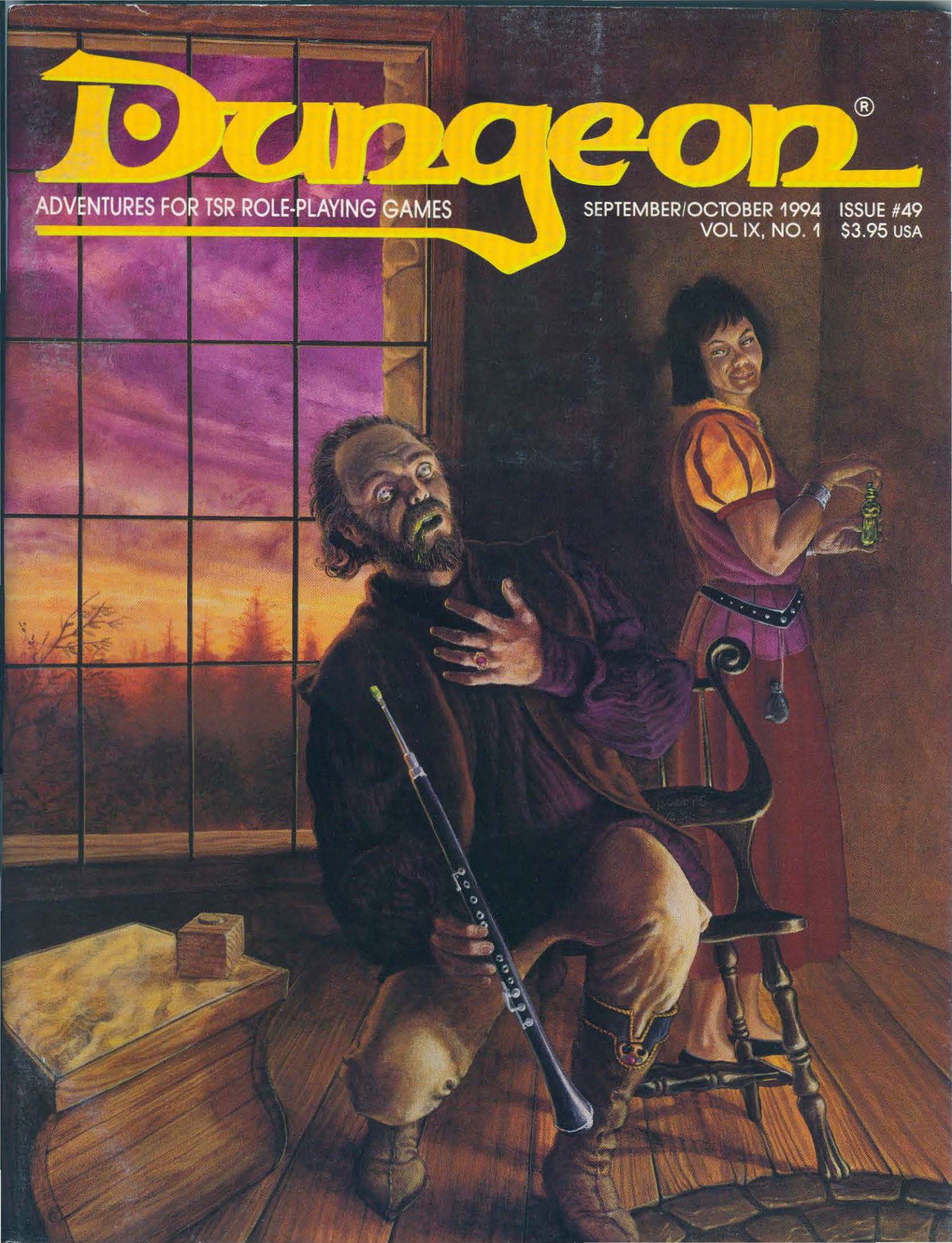

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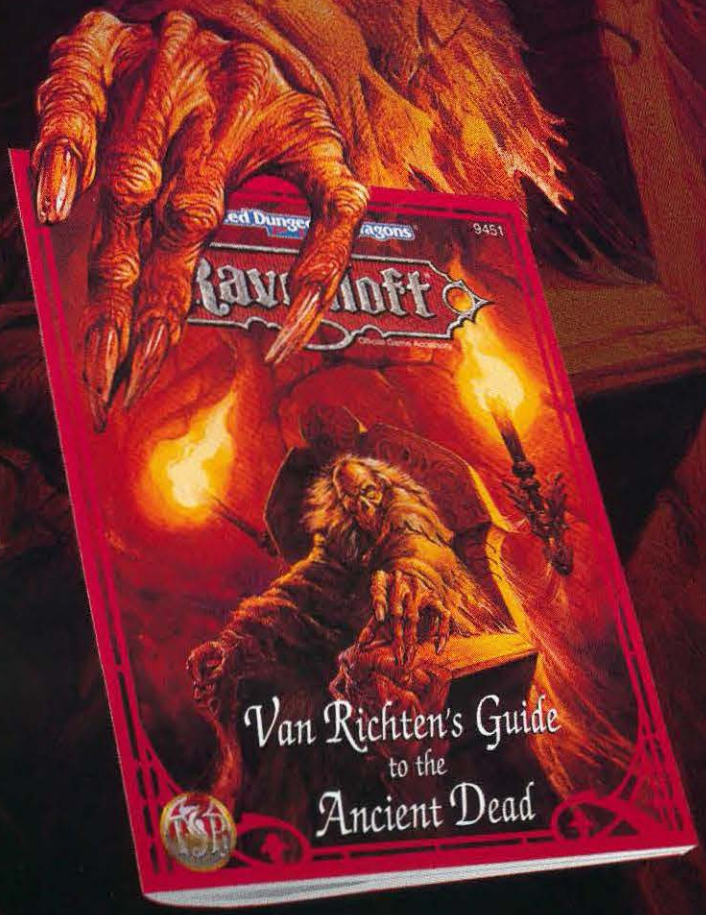

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SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1994 ISSUE #49

COVER: Love—as they say—is blind. The famous bard Gangwolf has just discovered this truth in our cover painting by Paul Jaquays for "Castle of the Blind Sun."

Strange Genesis

In the spring of 1988, I was invited to be Guest Editor at a small game convention just south of Chicago. Valerie Valusek was Artist Guest of Honor, and we decided to drive there together. While I negotiated the expressways, Valerie lamented that illustrators are always reacting to the stories of others; they must interpret someone else's ideas fairly closely, albeit in each artist's own unique style.

Just for fun, we came up with the idea of asking a writer to interpret, in words, the visual work of an artist. I commissioned Valerie to draw several illustrations, for which I would find an author to write an adventure. The only rule was that she couldn't make the pictures so outlandish that they couldn't be linked together into a coherent story.

Valerie delivered the illustrations, and I was very pleased with them: A group of four adventurers run into trouble in the woods. Later, they examine some tapestries that depict a stylized griffon, a castle, and a solar eclipse. The castle and eclipse reappear in a small illustration. A mysterious elf maiden, lute hung at her side, entreats the viewer's help. She seems concerned about her griffon companion. The lute is also shown in a small illustration of various musical instruments.

Valerie's working title was "In It for the Lute." I sent photocopies of the drawings to several of our regular authors, requesting each of them to come up with a proposal for an adventure based on the illustrations. Several authors were too busy. A few sent in proposals which, for a variety of reasons, were not accepted. I tried a few more people, but nothing seemed to be clicking.

Dejected, I put the drawings away and tried to forget them. About once a year, I'd send them off to yet another writer who was hot on the idea—at first. Eventually, Valerie stopped asking me if I'd found anyone yet to write the adventure.

Then, in the early days of this year, Paul Culotta and his family attended the Winter Fantasy gaming convention in Milwaukee. I'd just returned from the Washington, D.C. area, where Paul had been a very gracious host, so I thought to return the favor by giving him—along with his wife Shari and son Todd—a tour of TSR, Inc. As part of our office tour, we stopped in art director Larry Smith's office, where I pulled open a drawer and there were Valerie's drawings. "You wouldn't be interested in a little experiment?" I asked Paul. He was, and the effort of writing the newly named "Castle of the Blind Sun" turned into a family project.

That's how, almost seven years later, we finally got Valerie Valusek's artwork out of Larry's file drawer. I think the adventure was worth the wait.

Barbara G. Young

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The setting sun, and music at the close,
As the last taste of sweets, is sweetest last,
Writ in remembrance, more than things long past.
William Shakespeare, *King Richard II*, Act II, Scene 1

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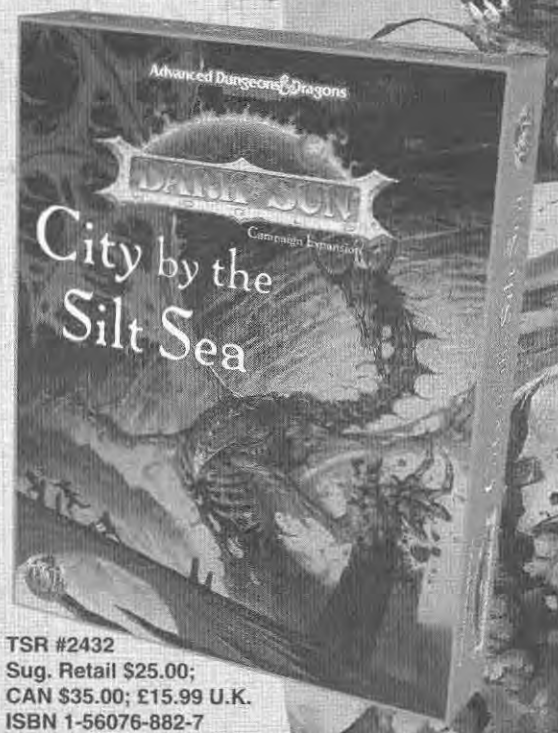

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LETTERS

Please let us know what you think about this issue of DUNGEON® Adventures. Although we can't print every letter we receive, we read them all and seriously consider your comments and suggestions. Write to: Letters, DUNGEON Adventures, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147 U.S.A. You can also contact us by sending electronic mail to tsr.mags@genie.geis.com. We will not publish your address (regular or email) unless you specifically request us to do so.

Campaigning with DUNGEON Adventures

When our gaming group created our current campaign world a year ago, I planned ahead and made sure that when my turn to DM rolled around, I would be ready. I tried to make it easy on myself and include as many DUNGEON adventures and SideTreks as possible, planning ahead based on the terrain and the milieu of the area. In fact, on several occasions the adventure that I was reading sparked an idea that became an important part of the campaign area.

We began play at first level with an unusual party: a psionicist, two bards (a loremaster and a jongleur) and a druid/mage. Without muscle or numbers on the PCs' side, I had to adjust downward some of what I had planned, but everything is working out well.

This party of PCs has been through "Rudwilla's Stew" (issue #45), which worked out well, even for the odd group we had. In the future I plan to use "All Things Nice" (issue #45), "A Way With Words" (issue #41), "Old Man Katan" (issue #41), "Legacy of the Liosalfar" (issue #42), "Ransom" (issue #42), "Dovedale" (issue #46), and "Fraggart's Contraption" (issue #47). Although we play AD&D® 2nd Edition games, it is very easy to convert other adventures, and we do so often.

The planning method that so far has worked best (and intrigued the players) has been to distribute rumors based on adventures I might be running. I looked through the DUNGEON magazines I intended to use and wrote down things like "The island in the middle of Misty Lake is haunted by restless spirits. No one has ever returned from that lonely isle." (This is an exaggerated version of "Lady of the Mists," issue #42.) I included a mess of red herrings and distributed 1-4 rumors to each player character (I gave a couple extra to the bards). They have so far tossed out a couple of these as ideas for future adventures. Wherever they go, I'll be ready, thanks to DUNGEON Adventures.

Erik Jensen
Severna Park, Maryland

Wish List

I have been an avid AD&D game player for 15 years, and a subscriber to your magazine since issue #1. Your publication is definitely a great value. Herein are a couple of suggestions that I feel would enhance it even further.

First, I would like to see all of the spells not merely listed, but their casting times, durations, areas of effect, etc. all spelled out according to the caster's level. Figuring all this out is probably the most time-consuming task I have when using an adventure from your magazine. I know this would take up page space, but I feel it would be worth it.

Second, have you ever considered selling copies of your magazine on computer disk? Virtually every DM I know has a home computer. Disk copies would allow quick and easy modification of anything the DM wants (changing a monster type or delineating spell effects as mentioned above). Your first response is probably, "What kind of computer? What kind of disk?" Everyone I know uses IBM compatible computers.

Third, I notice that a lot of "building" adventures (those set inside a wizard's tower or an inn, for example) often make no mention of the exterior of the building. What are the walls made of? What is the roof made of? Are there glass windows? How do they open? Do they have locks? In both "Quelkin's Quandary" [issue #47] and "Asflag's Unintentional Emporium" [issue #36], the players in my campaign never used a door to enter or exit a building. Windows and knocking holes in the walls and roofs are preferred methods of entry for anyone who knows about booby traps or the spell *glyph of warding*. Sure, sometimes I put in additional traps or spells to ward windows, but I don't like to have to spend the time doing that. Even in the best adventures, I must still do time-consuming design work before playing, and time is what I have least of.

Fourth, how about an occasional drawing of a building or important room/encounter area? I am a terrible artist, so it would be good to show players what the building actually looks like from the outside.

Don't take these attempts to fine tune everything to my personal satisfaction too hard; I thoroughly enjoy your magazine, and even enjoy reading the adventures that I have no use for in my campaign.

Shawn E. Porter
Clayton, New York

Continued on page 9

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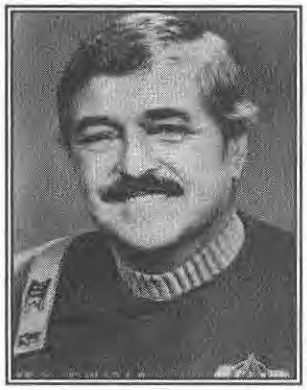

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Continued from page 6

It's very unlikely we'll be able to accommodate all your requests, Shawn. Much of what you ask of us is the sort of preparation that each DM must do to personalize an adventure for the current campaign. We can add more detail, but that just means more readers must change each adventure to suit themselves.

Believe it or not, there are still some people in the world who don't own computers. There seem to be a whole lot of people who own computers that aren't IBM compatible.

The Storytelling Urge

It was great to see Willie Walsh add another adventure to his body of work. I have always loved Willie's unique characters and plots, and "Fraggart's Contraption" (issue #47) was certainly in keeping with what I have come to expect from the Bard of Dublin. I particularly enjoyed the plans for the gnomish tank, as well as the intriguing scenario surrounding the construction of the craft. Willie's adventure was entertaining to read and easy to play, epitomizing what a DUNGEON adventure is all about.

Regarding the comments made about the value of plot- and character-driven adventures, I believe most would-be DUNGEON authors could take a lesson or two from Willie. After all, he's had more adventures published in the pages of DUNGEON magazine than anyone, so he must be doing something right. Just in case some of these same authors haven't read Willie's work because it's laced with solid characters and intriguing story lines, I'd like to share some advice Willie once shared with me:

Make your characters come to life; make them more than just a series of statistics. Look for a new angle or twist to your adventure. Find out what the editors want and try to give it to them as best you can.

I believe this last point is crucial. The editors of DUNGEON magazine certainly have enough experience to determine what readers will enjoy. How enjoyable can a list of encounters be without some carefully crafted background and goal-driven NPCs? Sure, hacking down a charging werewolf is always fun, but turn that same werewolf (as Willie has already done) into an evil wizard inadvertently *magic jarred* into the body of a lycanthrope, and the party encounters something much more—an adventure that will require more than mere dice rolling and the checking of character statistics.

I don't mean to be too hard on advocates of plotless adventures. However, humans love good stories—we tell them, listen to them, and, yes, take part in them when possible. Thus, strong plots are necessary to adventures. Just ask Willie.

J. Lee Cunningham
Alexandria, Virginia

Diversity in Gaming

Although I have enjoyed DUNGEON magazine for quite some time now, this is the first time that I have really felt compelled to write.

It was not the quality of the magazine that prompted me to write. Indeed, it is evident that great pride is taken by those who work on DUNGEON Adventures. It is a fine, informative magazine that I look forward to enjoying for many years to come. It was not the modules themselves that prompted me to write, even though I often use them as idea springboards for my own dungeons, and on occasion use them outright.

No, only one thing pushed me over the edge of losing my anonymity: the "Letters" page debate on how role-playing games are properly played that has been raging for months now.

Come on, guys. Give it a break! Each opinion presented is given as if it is the ultimate in righteousness, a paragon of expertise. Indeed, the authors of the letters often brag about how long they have been DMing, as if that time was a badge of authority. Risking falling into the same trap, I assert that my many years of playing *Yahtzee* behind the DM screen while the players try to negotiate my crafty tricks and traps have shown me that there are times when my way is not the best.

Each group of people that I have played with has had its own collective personality. Each group prefers its own blend of role-playing and combat. Each game has its own house rules. I have even been known to adjust my DMing style to the players (this might be a shock, I know). If a player has a suggestion on how to change the rules and procedures to improve the flow of play, and I agree, then it is so. The game is more fun when everyone, including the DM, is interacting.

I have yet to participate in a game of poker, gin rummy, *Monopoly*, or for that matter *Candyland* that doesn't have some kind of house rules in addition to the original directions. If changing the rules makes the game more fun, why not? Putting money in the center of the board for the next person who lands on Free Parking may not be in the official rules, but I have yet to hear anyone complain that doing so does not exemplify the true spirit of *Monopoly*.

As gamers, we don't need this bickering splitting us apart. Let's start having some respect for each other's opinions and styles of play.

To those who prefer hack and slash, let me point out that sometimes small details add diversion to play. It's boring to go into a bar and be served by the innkeeper. But what if Rupert the innkeeper is grumpy because his serving wench quit to get married, and he has to serve the customers instead of supervising the cook, who has burned the bread today. This type of background gives an opportunity for the players to interact with a personality with his own quirks. It could even lead to a good bar fight, or getting hired for a new job.

On another side, I once had a group that preferred to role-play every step of a three-day journey. I thought that I would go crazy. I couldn't convince them that it would be a really neat thing just to see if there were any encounters and get on with it. Role-playing has its place, and there are times when it is definitely best to gloss over a period of time in which nothing interesting happens.

Everyone has his or her own take on what makes a game fun. One group may like combat with weapon speeds included. Others may prefer no weapon speeds but like declared intent. One DM may put together a story with a coherent plot, while another may just set up a string of random encounters. We all play a little differently, but we are all still playing the same game. Instead of arguing about how to do it best, let's just play the game and have fun. Isn't that what a game is all about?

Richard Chase
Atchison, Kansas

Continued on page 47

THE DARK PLACE

BY LEE SHEPPARD

Something has waited long centuries for your arrival.

Artwork by Tom Dow

Lee writes: "This module is dedicated to a treasure that I would fight any monster, no matter how big, hairy and ugly, to protect—my daughter, Nicola. There is no greater reward than a child's smile, and Nicola's is a beauty. I hope that one day she thinks her dad is pretty cool for getting published, perhaps when she's old enough to start role-playing herself."

"The Dark Place" is an AD&D® adventure for a well-mixed party of 4-6 neutral- and good-aligned player characters of levels 5-7 (about 28 total levels). A group of players that knows the value of cooperation will probably get the most enjoyment out of this adventure; a party of heroic loners stands a good chance of being decimated. With some modification, this adventure could also be played by one DM and one moderately powerful PC of levels 10-12.

The adventure can be set in any game world that includes sections of coast that have remained unexplored for some time.

For the Player Characters

The PCs are either serving as crew or traveling as passengers on the small coastal vessel the *Gannet*. The reasons why the PCs are on the *Gannet*, and why it is passing this section of coastline, are left up to the DM. They should have nothing to do with the legends surrounding the Dark Place. (See "For the Dungeon Master.") In fact, the PCs should remain ignorant about the history of this location for the greater part of the adventure. They will be given some clues later on, as they explore the castle.

The *Gannet* is a cog (*Player's Handbook*, page 71), with 18 crew members. Individual NPCs who are important to the story are detailed as the adventure progresses, but for now the following statistics should be sufficient:

Sailor: AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 8; knife, belaying pin or club.

Elgrad Humbarr (captain): AL LG; AC 4; MV 12; F4; hp 25; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 13, D 14, C 13, I 11, W 9, Ch 14; ML 11; *chain mail +1, scimitar +1*, heavy crossbow, *ring of swimming*.

A seasoned merchant and sailor, Elgrad looks after his men, as long as they are willing to put in a hard day's work. Those who work hard are paid well, so

Elgrad has had few problems with his current crew. Although Elgrad is a fierce bargainer when it comes to selling cargo, he is still a sailor at heart and believes most of the tales and legends that are associated with sea travel in general.

Elgrad dresses well for a ship's captain. His body armor is covered by a well-tailored jerkin and embroidered cloak.

Tarsus Nels (first mate): AL CG; AC 4; MV 12; F3; hp 21; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 16, D 12, C 15, I 8, W 12, Ch 11; ML 11; *scale mail +1,* shield, *war hammer +2,* light crossbow, *boots of speed.*

Tarsus was formerly a cavalryman, but a sword cut to his right leg during a skirmish cost him the long-term career he had been seeking. While leaving a waterfront tavern in a drunken stupor (one of many he found himself in after his discharge), he literally ran into Elgrad. Despite the two initially coming to blows over the incident, they eventually became good friends. Elgrad's unselfish offer of employment probably saved the former cavalryman's life, for drink would eventually have been the end of him. Tarsus is a likeable fellow who asks the PCs many questions about their travels and adventures.

While the cog is traveling along the coast, a sudden and savage storm forces the *Gannet* to seek shelter. DMs who wish to add something extra to this adventure should role-play the *Gannet*'s passage through the storm, giving the PCs a chance to assist where they can. It may be necessary to fudge a few saving throws so that no one is lost overboard during the storm, but this scene should be played out to maintain the excitement.

Under cover of the storm, Captain Humbarr manages to find a safe refuge close to shore: a sheltered cove surrounded by low cliffs. After waiting out the storm, the captain advises the PCs that the ship will have to spend a day or two here while minor repairs are made. To help pass the time, the PCs and some other crew members are sent ashore to find fresh water and provisions. The PCs are directed to search to the south, while Tarsus leads three others in the opposite direction. Once the PCs have left the vessel and begun their journey inland, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> As you climb the steep slope that takes you from the small beach where your vessel lies at anchor, you glance momentarily toward the second group sent to scout for supplies. They have just reached the edge of a forest of scrubby trees and low bushes, common vegetation for an area this close to the ocean. Just before they make their way into the cover of the trees, Tarsus turns and looks your way. He gives a friendly wave, laughing while gesturing that you still have a long climb ahead of you. He then turns, joining the others in his group as they pass quickly out of sight. You turn to your own task and make your way up the steep cliff, grumbling to yourselves that you got the poor end of the deal.
>
> You spend the next two hours searching without success for any fresh water or signs of habitation. A lone sea gull, slowly making its way along the coast against the wind, is the only sign of life that you have spotted. It is bitterly cold atop the cliff, the strong sea breezes cutting through your armor and thick cloaks. When you decide that enough is enough, you head back to the *Gannet,* hoping that the other group had more success.
>
> When you spot the *Gannet,* however, you see that the pace of repairs on board is frantic. Elgrad notices you atop the cliff and gestures for you to hurry. Something seems to have gone very wrong.

When the PCs reach the vessel, they notice that Elgrad looks extremely concerned. He quickly explains that no one from Tarsus's group has yet returned. About an hour ago, a horrifying scream was heard from the north, where Tarsus and his party were searching. The scream was faint, carried by the wind from some distance away, but more than one crew member swears that it was a human scream. Obviously concerned for his close friend, Elgrad asks the PCs to find out what has happened to the others, telling them to be careful. The captain cannot accompany the PCs because he must supervise the repairs himself, and the crew has reached a point where the work cannot be put off for fear of the cargo spoiling from water damage.

If the PC party is weak, however, several NPC crew members can accompany them to provide assistance. Unless the party's strength and numbers must be boosted, however, the DM should discourage the PCs from taking too many others with them. Too large a party could reduce the enjoyment for the players, and inexperienced NPCs are likely to become victims themselves. Read through the entire adventure and assess the PCs' abilities before adding NPCs to the party.

Several NPCs who may join the party are:

Marcus: AL CG; AC 8; MV 12; F1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 12, D 14, C 11, I 8, W 7, Ch 12; ML 10; leather armor, short sword, short bow.

Marcus's best friend is missing with Tarsus's party. He will stay with the PCs throughout the adventure.

Norlak: AL NG; AC 8; MV 12; F1; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 11, D 12, C 10, I 6, W 12, Ch 8; ML 6; leather armor, mace.

Norlak would rather be somewhere else and will probably bolt at the first opportunity unless the PC party has overwhelming numbers on its side.

Ingmar: AL LN; AC 7; MV 12; F2; hp 13; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 14, D 10, C 16, I 11, W 7, Ch 13; ML 12; leather armor, shield, spear, dagger.

Ingmar thinks that he is a far better fighter than he actually is, but is fairly brave and will not desert the party unless the odds are stacked heavily against them.

For the Dungeon Master

Two hundred years ago, the wizard Tyranthius chose to live along a section of seacoast that later became known as the Dark Place. It was a wild, lonely location, constantly battered by storms from the sea. Although a town had grown up around the small castle that had served as an outpost in a long-forgotten war, the castle had been abandoned almost as soon as it was built. No ships bothered to visit, for the town lay far from the most profitable trade routes. The local population survived on their own, cut off from trade and a government that seemed to have forgotten the outpost and the town.

To anyone else, this would have seemed a dark and depressing place, but Tyranthius was thrilled. Here was an

excellent location for him to conduct his experiments—with no questions asked.

Tyranthius set himself up in the deserted castle, his unusual generosity with the local townsfolk ensuring that he would be left alone while he conducted his researches. Blinded by Tyranthius's gold, the townsfolk failed to realize the evil that they had let into their midst.

Tyranthius's research concerned the Outer Planes and the summoning of creatures who made such places their homes. When his initial attempts at contact were unsuccessful, Tyranthius's desperation led him to the nearby town, where he abducted a young woman and dragged her back to the castle.

Ignoring her pitiful pleas for mercy, Tyranthius calmly and cruelly killed her, using the spilled blood of an innocent in one last attempt to create a gateway to the Outer Planes. This time, his summons was answered, a shimmering portal appearing in the space before his unfortunate victim.

Out of the portal came a creature that made even Tyranthius step back in horror. He had summoned a gacholoth, a type of lesser yugoloth. Unfortunately for the evil wizard, he failed to anticipate the power of the creature that he had summoned (he didn't have a copy of the *Book of Keeping* mentioned in the PLANESCAPE™ MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® accessory) and hadn't provided adequate binding magic to ensure his safety. After consuming the body of the poor girl whom Tyranthius had murdered, the creature turned on the wizard himself.

In his attempts to fight off the creature, all that the panicked wizard managed to do was seal the gateway to the Outer Planes, effectively trapping the yugoloth on the Prime Material plane. The creature howled in rage, its forced confinement too much to take. In revenge, it seized the screaming wizard in its claws and tore him to pieces.

Having developed a taste for human blood, the creature quickly discovered the nearby town. Over the next few months, it killed dozens of townsfolk, taking them from their beds while they slept, or as they came back late at night from their fishing vessels. Once it realized that the townspeople could do little in the way of armed resistance, the gacholoth gave up all pretense of secrecy, killing people by day and night and dragging their bodies back to the castle for a horrid feast. The people of the town soon realized that unless they did something, they would all suffer the same horrible fate.

The survivors finally voted to abandon their town, deciding that leaving behind everything they owned was far better than dying at the hands of some foul creature. To ensure that their escape was not detected until they had put many miles between themselves and their former home, eight volunteers stayed behind to sacrifice their lives for the good of the others. They did not survive for long.

Over the following years, a number of adventurers and travelers stopped at the deserted town at various times, most of them quickly becoming victims themselves. The tales of the few lucky ones who managed to escape added to the legends and fears that sprang up about the Dark Place.

More years passed, and eventually the tales about the Dark Place lost their popularity. A better road was built some distance to the east, so travelers no longer passed near the deserted town and its ruined castle. The yugoloth did not leave the outpost, though. Its unique nature gave the creature incredible patience and resilience, so the yugoloth sat waiting in the castle for all these long years.

Over the years, many creatures have made their homes in the town and castle. While these have provided some small consolation, the yugoloth still hoped that humans would once again make their way to the small town. Then the real feasting could begin again.

The Town

The PCs know approximately where Tarsus and his companions entered the forest, so they should have no trouble following the other party's trail. The ground does not slope as sharply as the path the PCs took up the cliffs earlier, so the party should not be required to make any Dexterity checks. Fortunately, the recent storm has made the PCs' task even easier. On the muddy ground under the trees, the tracks of Tarsus and the three crewmen stand out clearly. Once the PCs have found the tracks, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> Satisfied that you will have no trouble following the other party's tracks, you set off into the forest. The trees here are not thick with foliage, but the dark gray clouds that seem to haunt this area of the coast still make the forest a gloomy place. As with your earlier exploration to the south, there is little animal or bird life. The sudden and unexpected caw of a large black raven makes you jump in surprise, but the creature flies quickly away as you draw nearer.
>
> The tracks that you have been following show no sign of any struggle, or even a quickening of pace. If the other party has come to grief, it didn't occur within this forest. You follow the tracks for another half mile before the trees thin out. Emerging from the forest, you are surprised by the sight that greets your eyes.
>
> A town big enough to hold a few hundred people sits in a low river valley directly in front of you. The town even has its own small castle, sitting atop a hill at the opposite side of the valley.
>
> As you look more closely, you can see that the town has been deserted for many years, perhaps even as long as a century or two. Only a quarter of the buildings still have roofs, and many more are in almost complete ruin. The buildings' hardy stone construction is probably the only reason that any trace of the town still exists. Local vegetation has begun its slow occupation of the town's streets and buildings, for you can glimpse patches of green and gray through many an open window and empty alley.
>
> The tracks you have been following lead directly into the town, but of the other party there is no sign.

Town Encounters

The DM should carefully read the sidebar on the next page and the gacholoth entry at the end of this adventure. The yugoloth's methods of attack are quite specific and occur at specified intervals as the PCs explore the ruined town. In addition to the attacks of the gacholoth, there are three encounters within the town itself. Each encounter provides either clues or assistance to the PCs.

A. Signs Of A Struggle. If the PCs follow the tracks out of the forest, they

see that the trail soon joins the main road into town. If the PCs continue down the road, they pass a number of deserted and partially ruined buildings. About 100 yards after entering the town, the PCs come upon the signs of a struggle.

A successful tracking nonweapon proficiency check (with a +3 bonus) reveals deep tracks in the muddy road, as if a number of booted humanoids were turning in all directions. A sword and a belaying pin lie in the mud. Large pools of drying blood cover the ground, and the walls of the nearby buildings are splattered with blood. A gory trail of blood leads north toward the town center; a smaller line of blood leads to the east, into the ruined building marked A on the map. Any PC who takes more than a passing interest in the smaller blood trail will spot a sailor's gold earring near the entrance to the stone building. If the PCs decide to investigate the building's interior, read the following to the players:

> Although much of the roof of this building is missing, little light manages to find its way in, and it takes your eyes a minute to adjust to the semidarkness. After a few moments, you notice a figure curled up in the far corner. As you move nearer, you see that it is Krellar, one of the crewmen who accompanied Tarsus. He appears to be in shock; his knees are drawn up to his chest, and his arms wrapped tightly about them as he rocks slowly back and forth. His eyes stare vacantly ahead and his mouth moves, forming silent words. He is splattered with blood but does not appear to have been seriously wounded. Four deep scratches cut across his chest, and another set of what appear to be claw marks scar his cheek.
>
> Moving closer, you can hear what Krellar has been whispering. In his shocked state, the sailor repeats over and over, "So fast, so fast, didn't see it coming, so fast, so fast, didn't see it coming . . ."

Krellar: AL NG; AC 8; MV 12; F1; hp 7 (currently 2); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 10, D 11, C 13, I 7, W 13, Ch 12; ML 9; leather armor.

The PCs cannot rouse Krellar from his current state without magical assistance. While nothing short of a *heal* or *limited wish* spell will cure Krellar completely, the PCs can still do a few things to find out what has happened to the others. A *cure light wounds* or *cure serious wounds* spell will bring Krellar out of his self-induced trance so that the PCs can ask him questions, but he will be unable to fight, carry heavy loads, or relay messages. His sole desire after answering the PCs' questions is to escape the town and return to his ship. If the PCs insist that Krellar accompany them, he will break away from the PCs at the earliest opportunity, running blindly back into the forest.

A wizard PC who successfully *charms* Krellar may ask get the man to respond to questions. A *charmed* Krellar can be persuaded to accompany the PCs. However, as soon as the PCs see the gacholoth, Krellar will run screaming, dropping anything in his hands and pushing aside anyone who gets in his way. Because of his prior horrifying experience, for the first three rounds after next sighting the gacholoth, Krellar's Strength will be boosted by panic-induced adrenaline, giving him a Strength of 18(01) for attacks against anyone who tries to stop him from fleeing the town.

In either case, if the PCs rouse Krellar and ask him what happened to the others, read or paraphrase the following to the players, bearing in mind that it will take some time for Krellar to tell the whole story coherently. This is a perfect opportunity for the DM to really get into acting, playing the part of the terrified Krellar to the full. Feel free to ad lib, answering the PCs' questions only as they are asked, while constantly rolling dice (for dramatic effect, of course).

Gacholoth Tactics
(Keeping The PCs On Their Toes)

Once the PCs have discovered the scene of the gacholoth's attack on Tarsus's party (area A), the gacholoth begins its attacks on the party.

The gacholoth puts in its first appearance 10 minutes *playing time* after the PCs have spoken to Krellar, decided what their tactics will be, and left Krellar's hiding place. All subsequent encounters with the gacholoth, until the PCs reach the castle dungeon (areas 14-18) are also based on playing time, not game time. The DM must watch the clock throughout the rest of this adventure.

The gacholoth has built up an intimate knowledge of the town and castle over the many years it has lived here. It can strike the PCs from any angle except from below. (The gacholoth cannot burrow effectively.) The DM should exploit this ability when planning the gacholoth's attacks, varying the angle of attack with each encounter. The PCs could be attacked from above, only to be tackled from behind the next time. This should keep the PCs on guard at all times and emphasize the importance of teamwork.

The gacholoth uses hit-and-run tactics, striking once and then going into hiding, using its knowledge of the town to move about and set up another ambush. To determine the time between attacks, the DM should roll 1d6 after *each single attack* made by the gacholoth and consult the table below. Remember, times quoted are playing time (by the clock), not game time (turns).

Die Roll	Time To Next Attack
1-2	Next round.*
3-4	Waits 15 mins.
5-6	Waits 30 mins.

* The gacholoth will stay and fight for only two rounds unless specified otherwise in the text. If the gacholoth has already fought for two rounds, the DM should roll again.

The DM is strongly advised to watch the videos of *Predator* (I & II) and the *Alien* trilogy (especially *Alien 3*) before playing this module, to get ideas on how to add to the mood of this adventure. The PCs should be kept on edge at all times, the claustrophobic nature of the ruined town adding to the unexpectedness of the gacholoth's attacks. Once the PCs have had their first horrifying encounter with the gacholoth, the DM should roll dice frequently, consult charts for no reason, describe strange scuttling noises, and present the PCs with moving shadows—all to keep the players chewing their fingernails with worry.

"We came out of the forest and saw the town. Rather than head back and tell the others, we decided to have a look around. We had only been in the town for a few minutes when we were attacked. Something came at us fast, from above. It was black, that's all I can remember—that and the claws. Baldun and Zorvel were killed . . . so much blood. I can still hear their screams. Tarsus must have been wounded, too. I saw him go down, clutching at his leg.

"I was hit, too, but not badly. May the god of the sea curse my cowardly soul for what I did next. I ran and hid, leaving Tarsus behind in the street. I sat here and listened as the creature came back and took Baldun and Zorvel away. I should have done something but I couldn't; I was too scared.

"Some time later I heard Tarsus calling for help. He called to me, saying that his leg was badly hurt and that he couldn't get up. Just as I was about to crawl out and go to him, I heard *it* again. The creature had come back for Tarsus. (Krellar begins to sob uncontrollably.) I didn't help him. I just crawled back in here, trying to keep as quiet as I could. The last thing I remember is his cries for help as that monstrosity carried him away.

"You must understand—Tarsus was alive when the creature carried him off. It didn't kill him straight away like the others. He might still be alive. Please, you have to rescue him! You can't leave him to die. You have to rescue him!"

The unknown fate of Tarsus provides the incentive for the PCs to continue their investigations of the deserted town. The trail of blood leads to the castle, but the PCs may want to make some decisions before going to the castle. As suggested in the sidebar on the gacholoth's tactics, the players should have as much time as necessary to complete their initial strategy before the gacholoth attacks, but once the PCs leave Krellar's hiding place, they are fair game.

If the PCs decide to leave the town and head back through the forest to get reinforcements, the gacholoth will not follow. However, Krellar (if he is with the PCs) pleads that time is of the essence and insists that Tarsus may not survive long without help. He also says that, if the PCs return to the vessel without attempting to rescue Tarsus, Elgrad will not be impressed by their desertion of his friend.

Once the PCs have decided on their actions and move to rescue Tarsus, they should have their first encounter with the gacholoth. From this point on until the PCs enter the castle dungeon, the creature attacks the PCs at random intervals, at any location within the town or castle.

Gacholoth (lesser yugoloth): INT very; AL NE; AC −1; MV 18; HD 9+9; hp 65; THAC0 11; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 2-12/2-12 or 2-10 or by spell; SA spells, burning secretion, attack shock; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; MR 40%; SZ L; ML 14; XP 18,000; New Monster (see page 21).

The monster description and the sidebar should provide sufficient information for the DM to role-play each encounter with the gacholoth. In addition, one of the NPC crewmen accompanying the adventurers can become a victim of the gacholoth's first attack, increasing the impact of this encounter.

B. Previous Adventuring Party. If the PCs pass within 50 yards of this ruined building (they may be moving down the main street following the blood trail), they notice a skeletal figure lying just outside the southernmost entrance. If the PCs investigate, they can find two other humanoid skeletons lying on the floor inside the building.

Upon close examination, the PCs can see that the bones have been bleached white from exposure to the elements. The skeletons have obviously been lying here for many years. One of the two figures lying within the building has been decapitated; its skull can be found 20′ away from its normal point of attachment.

These three unfortunates were slaughtered by the gacholoth 50 years ago, when they stopped to camp for the night. The two in the building were killed in the gacholoth's initial attack; the one near the door was killed as he tried to make his escape. All of the former adventurers' equipment has rotted away or been carried off by lizards and rats, except for three special items.

The figure near the door was probably a fighter; his bony hand clutches the hilt of a long sword. If a PC wipes away the dirt that covers the weapon, it appears completely untarnished. This is a *long sword +3* and quite serviceable indeed. The first of the two skeletons inside the building sits against the wall, its armor keeping it propped up like some grotesque doll. The skeleton is wearing a suit of *scale mail +2*. Without magical assistance it is not immediately obvious that the armor is magical, but a quick wipe with a rag will reveal its perfectly preserved state. The third skeleton was a wizard in life. It wears a *ring of fire resistance,* and three empty ceramic potion bottles lie nearby. The corks of the bottles rotted away some time ago, allowing the potions to spill out and evaporate.

The skeletons are completely harmless, but the DM may animate them if feeling particularly nasty. Even harmless skeletons can be used to maintain tension in the adventure. To keep the PCs on edge, one of the skeletons may fall over unexpectedly, or a rat may drag a bone across the floor.

C. The Stranded Victim. Continuing to follow the trail of blood through the town brings the PCs within range of this building, which houses a tragic occupant. As the PCs come within 40 yards of the dilapidated dwelling, a sad young woman walks out through the open doorway. As soon as the young woman spots the party, she rushes toward the nearest PC, crying, "Help me! Please help me get away."

The young woman is actually a haunt, the restless spirit of one of the gacholoth's last victims before the townsfolk fled. The darkness of the doorway and the black clouds that seem to perpetually hover over the town help to disguise the haunt's naturally translucent appearance until she makes her attack.

Haunt: INT non; AL N; AC 0; MV 6; HD 5; hp 35; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg possession or by weapon type; SA Dexterity drain; SD silver, magical weapons, or fire to hit, suffers minimal damage from all attacks except magical fire; SZ M (5′6″); ML 16; XP 2,000; MM/186.

The woman is not evil. She has one overwhelming desire: to escape the town. At the time of her death, she was attempting to pack her bags and escape with her children. Unfortunately, the gacholoth decided to pay a visit on that very night. Pushing her children out

the nearest window to safety, the young woman sacrificed her life to ensure their escape. Her desire to be reunited with her children was so strong that the woman's spirit continued to live on in the form of a haunt.

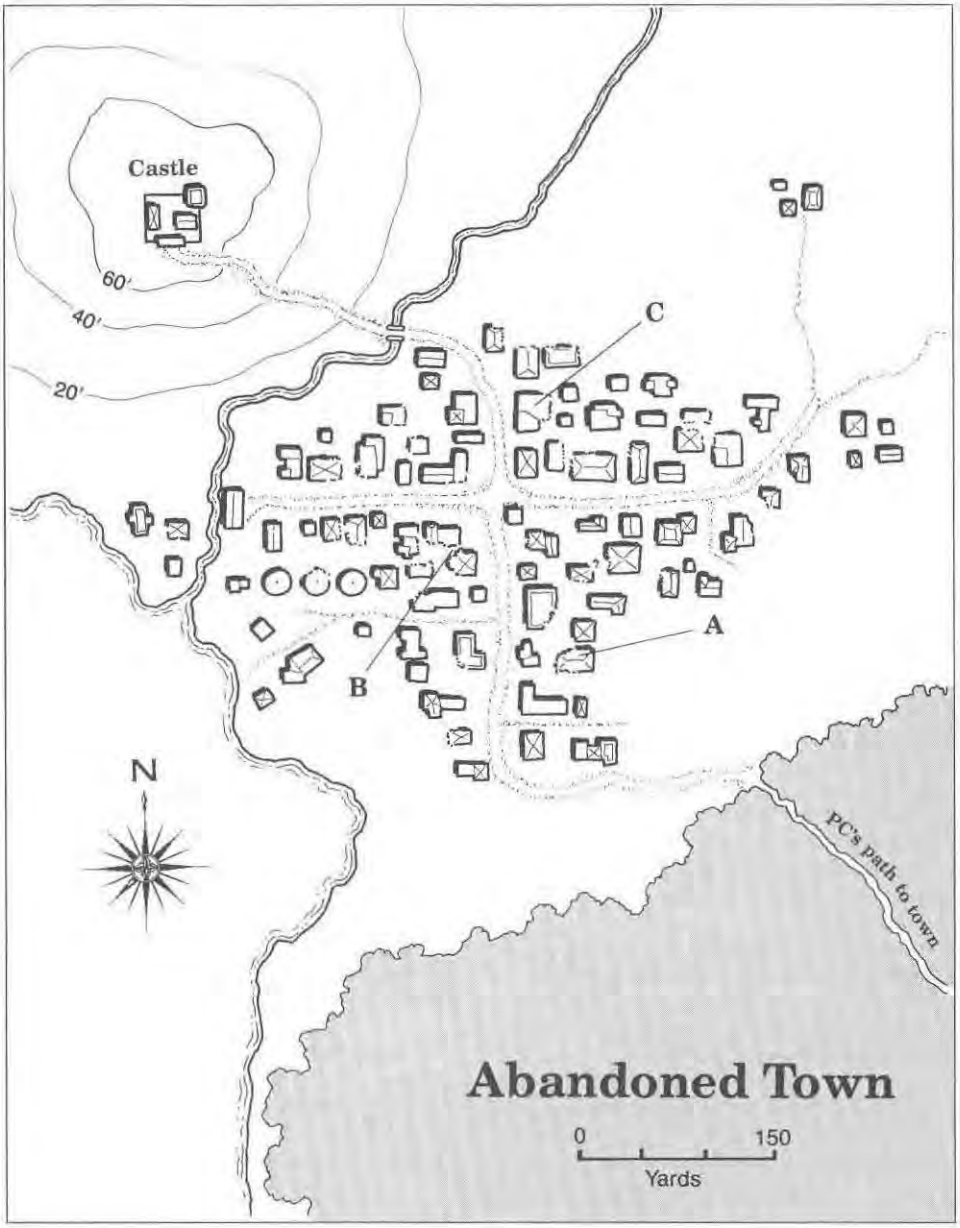
If the haunt successfully possesses one of the PCs, that PC should be instructed to go through the motions of packing nonexistent bags for a long journey and tying cloaks around long-lost children's necks before moving out of the building and through the town toward the forest. The DM should help the possessed PC make the packing scene as poignant as possible to provide the party with a dilemma. Do the PCs try to destroy the spirit of a tragically lost mother, or do they let her control their possessed comrade? The PCs (and the DM) must also bear in mind that the gacholoth can still attack at any time, even while the PC is possessed.

If the PCs decide to follow the haunt out of the town, the possessed PC stops at the edge of the forest. There the haunt leaves the PC's body with a softly whispered "Thank you" and is released from this troubled world. If the PCs take this option, they should be rewarded for their compassion with double the haunt's experience points (4,000 XP). If they destroy the haunt through other means, only half the experience points (1,000 XP) should be awarded.

The Castle

If the PCs continue to follow the trail of blood through the town and across the bridge, they find themselves approaching the small castle that occupies a strategic hill just outside the town. Like the rest of the town, the castle has seen better days. Its robust construction has prevented it from deteriorating as quickly as the town buildings, and the walls still appear quite solid.

The castle was built to house a small militia garrison rather than to resist a protracted siege. The outer walls are only 15′ high. The gate house and the single tower rise 5′ above the walls, making the highest points in the castle only 20′ above the ground. The walls are covered in the same coastal foliage that has begun to dominate the town, and any metal ornaments (torch holders, etc.) appear thoroughly tarnished. A close examination reveals deep scratches in many of the parapets and walls.



1. Main Gate. Two large wooden gates, their wood and brass reinforcements now showing signs of a long period of exposure to the coastal elements, protect the main entrance to the castle. One of the gates stands open. Both gates bear similar scratches to those found on the outer walls. A search of the ground reveals recent tracks, and the blood trail runs through the open gate.

2. Gate House. These two small rooms served as gate houses, providing shelter and office space for the soldiers who were assigned to guard the gates and admit visitors. Both rooms are completely empty, the furniture removed many years ago when the castle was abandoned by the militia. Even the door is missing from the east room. A trap door in the ceiling of each room provides access to the roof of the gate house (area 14) by means of a brass ladder.

3. Parade Ground. The large open space between the castle buildings was originally used as a parade ground and assembly point for the militia. The

troops stationed here were probably foot soldiers, for there is no evidence of stables or equipment associated with horses to be found anywhere. Three sets of stone stairs lead to the parapets. The well in the northern section of the parade ground still contains fresh water, but the bucket mechanism has seized up through neglect.

4. Barracks. These two rooms served as the sleeping quarters for the soldiers stationed here. A door between the two rooms allowed the soldiers to intermingle and gave access to the communal dining hall (area 5) through the door in the east barracks.

Although their furniture and possessions are long gone, the soldiers have still left their mark on the castle. Various bits of graffiti written by bored soldiers—some words in faded chalk, others carved into the walls themselves—tell of the dreams, humor, and drudgery of military life. A certain Sergeant Gulvar must not have been a popular man with the troops, for many of the comments speak of his fondness for "Drill, drill, and always more drill" and "The lash, the lash, it is his toy. He strikes us often to bring him joy." With such a leader, it is easy to see why many other verses speak of lost loves, dreamed-of treasures, and faraway lands.

A creative DM may wish to leave graffiti clues leading to further adventures, perhaps a faded drawing of a map or an old verse that answers a riddle the PCs have been trying to solve.

5. Dining Hall. This large room served as the garrison dining and meeting hall. The blood trail enters through the west door and goes no farther. Any PC who enters this room and takes more than a passing interest in its contents must make a saving throw vs. paralyzation (with a +2 bonus) or retch violently for 1-6 rounds (−2 on attack rolls, −1 on damage while thus incapacitated). The northeast corner of the room contains the remains of Baldun and Zorvel, the two sailors who were killed earlier by the gacholoth. They have been horribly mutilated and partially eaten by the creature, their bodies testament to the utterly evil nature of the yugoloth. Of Tarsus there is no sign. The PCs will have to continue their search if they are to find him before he suffers the same horrible fate.

6. Kitchen. This section of the castle was occupied by the wizard Tyranthius until his death, so it has not deteriorated as much as the areas previously described. Even so, the large fireplace on the south wall appears long neglected, and the room has no remaining furniture. Exposure to the elements through the open door (a result of the gacholoth's early explorations) caused all the wooden articles to rot away. Some rusted cooking utensils can be found on the floor.

7. Store. Originally used as a food store, this room was looted by the gacholoth soon after it killed the wizard. Storage shelves have collapsed onto the floor, deep scratch marks testifying to the cause of the destruction. A small barrel of oil avoided the fate of the other goods in the room, and the PCs will be able to salvage it for their own use. There is enough oil to fill six flasks. The barrel containing the oil is very old, however. Unless the PCs transfer its contents to other vessels, there is a good chance (70%) that the cask will break if dropped or struck.

8. Lounge. This room served as part of the militia officers' quarters but was converted into a bedroom by Tyranthius when he took over the castle. Like most of the rooms in the castle, it has been thoroughly trashed by the gacholoth, the remains of the wizard's fine furniture littering the floor.

9. Study. This room was originally occupied by the castle's commanding officer. Tyranthius used it as his study. The gacholoth has obviously been here, for the furniture has been destroyed and deep scratch marks scar the walls. One section of the west wall is even more noticeably scratched than any other place the PCs have seen, and a careful investigation will soon reveal the reason. A secret compartment is hidden in the wall, the gacholoth's deep scratch marks indicating its general dimensions.

This safe was constructed by the original builders of the castle and is carved directly into the castle walls. The door to the compartment is *wizard locked* (at 12th level), this simple spell serving to frustrate the gacholoth's attempts to get into the safe.

In the compartment are two pouches, one filled with a variety of gems (total value 3,500 gp), the other containing 500 pp and a *wand of earth and stone* (activation word "Zash," 12 charges remaining). While these are an excellent find by themselves, perhaps the most important contents of the compartment are three perfectly preserved books, each bound in red dragon hide.

The first (and largest) of the three books is Tyranthius's spellbook. It contains the following spells: *burning hands, charm person, comprehend languages, detect magic, magic missile, read magic, spider climb, unseen servant; alter self, darkness 15' radius, detect good, knock, spectral hand, stinking cloud, web, wizard lock; blink, dispel magic, explosive runes, fireball, hold person, protection from normal missiles, water breathing; detect scrying, dig, dimension door, fear, magic mirror; cloudkill, contact other plane, shadow door, telekinesis; guards and wards, legend lore.* The spellbook is trapped with *explosive runes.*

The second (slightly smaller) book contains Tyranthius's notes and details of the wizard's inquiries into the nature of the Outer Planes. Unfortunately, much of the information contained within is conjecture and hearsay; little of it bears much relation to the real features of the Outer Planes. However, the book contains a much earlier and more primitive version of the ninth-level wizard spell *gate* (see *PH,* page 195), referred to as a *planar door* spell.

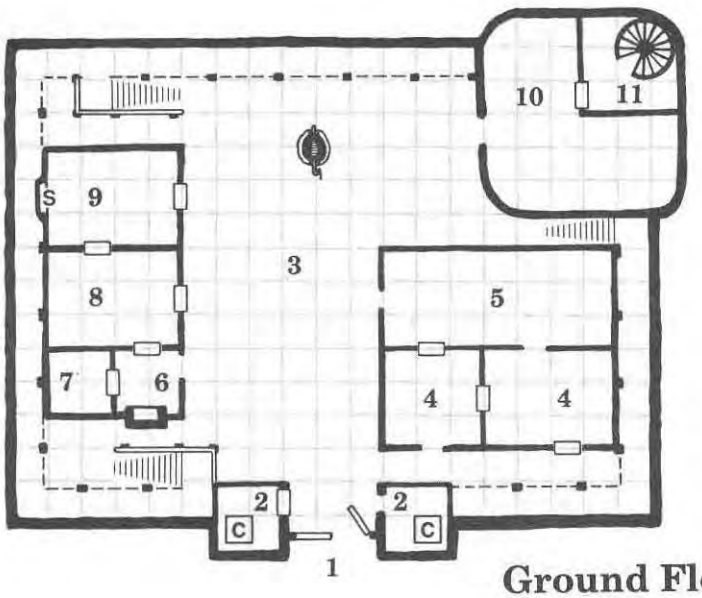
Tyranthius used a *planar door* spell when he inadvertently summoned the gacholoth. This spell differs from a *gate* spell in a number of key areas as detailed in the spell description on page 18. Proud Tyranthius had no idea how dangerous a spell he had created, an ignorance that was to have fatal consequences for the wizard.

The spell requires human blood as a material component, but this is not stated in the notebook. The PCs will have to determine the final ingredient by examining the last of the three volumes.

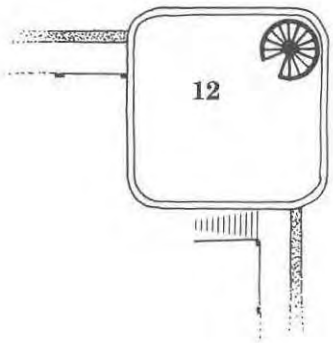
The last (and smallest) book is Tyranthius's journal. Written in a thin, spidery script, it tells of the wizard's decision to come to this town and set up in the castle, then goes on to detail his initial experiments and his decision to capture a young woman from the town. If the PCs examine the journal's last entry, read the following to the players:

Castle

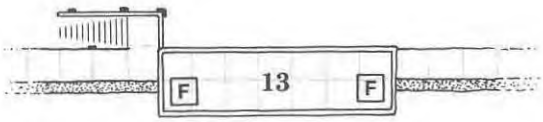
1 square = 10′



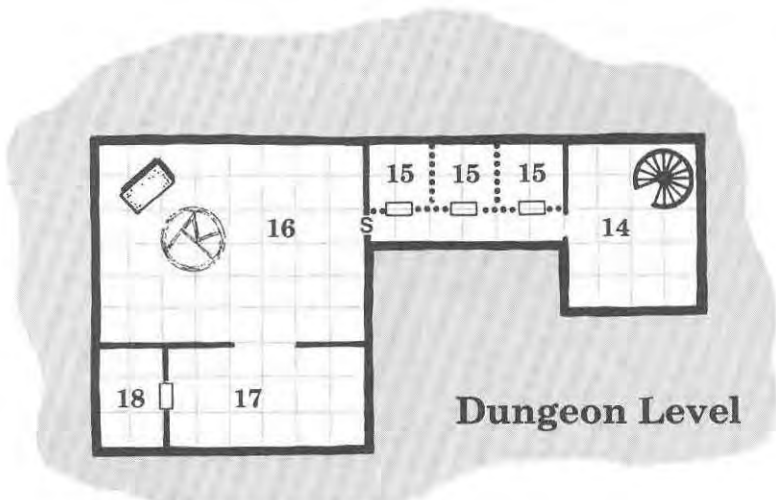
Ground Floor



Second Floor
(Tower)



Second Floor
(Gate)



Dungeon Level

". . . I have no fear that my soul will be damned by what I intend to do tonight, for my soul was damned many years ago when I first set eyes on the wonders that the planes have to offer the strong and ambitious. The death of the girl will give me what I need to complete the spell. After so many years and so many experiments, tonight I shall at last be successful. This journal shall be the first record of my triumph. Those other wizards will mock me no more when I return with a few new companions at my side. How I shall enjoy their screams as they are dragged into the Abyss . . ."

The DM should use the three volumes to provide the PCs with as much background information as necessary so that they can deduce what they may be up against.

Planar Door
(Conjuration/Summoning)

Level: 7
Range: 10 yards
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 7
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

Casting a *planar door* spell opens a shimmering doorway between the caster and a randomly determined Outer Plane. It also draws the attention of planar creatures nearby, who may choose to step through to the caster's location (50% chance).

The caster of the *planar door* spell has no control over which plane is contacted or what creature is summoned, whether a fiend or an archon. The spell is like an open door to the Outer Planes, through which any creature can pass without restriction or obligation. Creatures can step through the *planar door* in either direction, and the spell lasts until a number of creatures equal to the caster's level have passed through. The caster can close the *planar door* at any time, ending the spell.

The spell requires fresh human blood, either the caster's or blood from a sacrifice. Casting this spell ages the wizard one year.

10. Tower, Ground Floor. The castle tower has only two levels, so the ceiling of this room is about 15′ high. The outer door to this room has been smashed inward, its debris littering the center of the room. This damage was caused by the gacholoth, who re-entered the tower through this door after exiting the tower by climbing the staircase to the roof and climbing down the walls. If the PCs look carefully at the floor, they see a few drops of relatively fresh blood, suggesting that the gacholoth may have recently come this way carrying a body. The room is devoid of any furnishings.

11. Spiral Staircase. This room contains an old bronze spiral staircase that leads up to the tower roof (area 12) and down to the dungeon (area 14). The staircase is narrow and can accommodate the PCs in single file only. The adventurers will be vulnerable to attack by the gacholoth while climbing up or down, for the creature is not restricted to using the stairs. There are no traces of blood on the staircase or anywhere else within this room.

12. Tower Roof. Climbing the spiral staircase brings the PCs to the top of the tower, where they have an excellent view of the castle, the town, the ocean, and the nearby forest. The gacholoth spends a great deal of time here when not pursuing prey, scanning the town and the nearby countryside for new victims. There is a flat 20% chance that the gacholoth will be found here at any time. Unless the PCs are moving silently or invisibly, the gacholoth clambers over the side of the tower to arrange an ambush as soon as it detects the PCs' impending arrival.

The gacholoth's tactics here are crude but highly effective. It waits, hanging off the tower wall, until one of the PCs looks out or leans over the side. Once anyone exposes any part of his anatomy this way, the gacholoth makes a grab at that character and tries to throw the PC off the roof. If the PC fails a Strength roll following a successful strike by the gacholoth, the unfortunate character is flung from the tower roof to the ground below, taking only 2d6 hp falling damage but being stunned for 1-6 rounds, during which time the gacholoth attacks that PC. Stunned creatures lose 4 from their Armor Class and strike last in every round.

The gacholoth continues to attack until attacked itself, whereupon it immediately tries to escape, preferring to save its energy for a later attack. If no PC looks over the side of the tower, or if a PC makes his Strength roll to break free from an attack, the gacholoth makes no further attacks here but quickly clambers down the tower wall to arrange some other ambush.

13. Gate House Roof. The roof of the gate house is reached by climbing either of the two ladders in the guard rooms (area 2). Although this area is above the castle walls, it is not as high as the tower roof, so it is not possible to see the top of the tower from here. Even so, this position affords an excellent view of the town and coastline.

14. Dungeon Entrance. The lowest level of the castle was built by Tyranthius, using his spells and *wand of earth and stone.* The PCs need some form of magical or artificial light from this point on, as no natural light makes its way down here.

The bottom of the spiral staircase opens into a large room whose floor is covered with bones, the result of many years of feasting by the gacholoth. It is quite a gruesome sight, for there must be 40 skulls and skeletons lying here, of all sizes and descriptions, from animals to humans and nonhumans. If the PCs make the effort to pick through the bones, they can find two items of value: a pair of *bracers of defence AC3* and a *ring of free action.* The DM may also leave a clue to further adventures, perhaps a map in a dead hobgoblin's backpack. A door to the west leads farther into the dungeon complex.

15. Cells and Secret Door. These cells built by Tyranthius show his complete misunderstanding of the power of the creatures he was trying to contact. Although these cells are only marginally more secure than a standard prison cell, Tyranthius actually believed that they would be strong enough to hold any extra-planar creature he summoned to do his bidding. He was convinced that his personal power would be enough to discourage disobedience.

The cells were used only once, to hold the poor woman who was sacrificed in the summoning ceremony. A search of the west wall reveals a large hinged secret door that opens into the summoning chamber (area 16).

16. Summoning Chamber. Here, Tyranthius conducted his experiments into contacting the Outer Planes. When the wizard was finally (and fatally) successful, the gateway opened in the middle of the north wall. Scorch marks show where the circular opening originally existed; a nearby section of the wall is marked as if it had been struck by a magical bolt of force. Tyranthius's magic scorched it as the mage battled the gacholoth.

A circle of power is painted on the floor, a protective shield that turned out to be far less effective than Tyranthius could have imagined. Beyond the circle, a robed skeleton lies on a stone altar, the young woman's bony wrists and ankles no longer confined by the iron shackles that once held her in place. Pieces of a second skeleton lie shattered on the floor in the southwest corner of the room. This pitiful heap is all that remains of the proud wizard Tyranthius, whom the gacholoth flung into this corner after it picked his bones clean.

17. Laboratory. Bottles and flasks once filled with spell components lie smashed on the ground, their contents long ago mingled with the earthen floor. The splinters of a large work table have been ground into the dirt along with the broken glass and crockery. A heap of rags is piled in the southwest corner, near a door.

As the PCs approach the door, they can see that the pile of rags is a human body. They have found Tarsus, alive but unconscious from loss of blood. He is currently down to only 3 hp and is in serious need of help. If a *cure* spell or potion is not available, anyone with healing proficiency should be able to stop the flow of blood so that no further hit points are lost.

The gacholoth did not kill Tarsus immediately, preferring to bring him back here to torture at its leisure. The creature dumped its prize in the corner and went off to collect Krellar from the town (see area A). Tarsus was too weak to crawl far, and he collapsed soon after being dumped by the gacholoth. If the PCs heal Tarsus, he awakens and is greatly overjoyed to see his former companions.

18. Storeroom. Tyranthius used this room for additional storage space. All the shelves have been pulled from the walls, dumping their contents onto the floor among the broken boards.

If the PCs take the time to search the room, they can find a 12' length of thin but strong iron chain, four iron shackles, two lanterns, three flasks of oil, two empty wooden barrels treated with tar, a small empty iron-bound chest, 50 sheets of parchment, and a large whetstone.

Unless the PCs defeated the gacholoth earlier in the adventure, the creature mounts its final attack here in the basement. One round after the PCs open the secret door to the summoning chamber (area 16), the gacholoth moves to the spiral staircase in area 11. Three rounds later, it makes its way down the staircase to the doorway leading to the cells, where it can observe the wall that contains the secret door. Six rounds after that, it moves to the secret door. If the secret door has been left open, it first casts a *darkness 15' radius* spell into the center of the summoning chamber before charging into the room and attacking with claws or teeth. If the secret door has been closed, it pushes the door open and rushes into the room before casting the spell.

Unlike previous encounters with the

gacholoth, this time the creature fights the PCs until it kills them all or it has dropped to 10 hp or less. If the gacholoth stops fighting because of loss of hit points, it tries to flee the chamber by using its *teleport without error* power to reach the tower roof (area 12). The gacholoth wants to cause as much confusion as possible so that it can inflict heavy damage to as many of the PCs as it can.

Concluding the Adventure

Rescuing Tarsus should be the most important goal of the PCs throughout this adventure. If they succeed in returning Tarsus to the *Gannet*, the adventurers should be awarded a 5,000-XP bonus for completing the main story goal. This bonus can be modified by such factors as how many times they fought off the attacks of the gacholoth (perhaps 500-1,000 XP per attack if the gacholoth was not killed) and how many of the secondary encounters they completed.

The PCs might deal with the threat of the gacholoth in a number of ways. They may decide to set a trap in town or in the castle. The PCs might rescue Tarsus and escape the town without killing the gacholoth. The creature will not follow fleeing PCs, preferring to stay in the area it knows and lick its wounds. Even so, the PCs might still be hired to capture or kill the creature later, if the town once again becomes significant in local affairs. These encounters can be role-played by the DM based on the information provided within the module.

Adventurous (or foolhardy) PCs might try to cast Tyranthius's *planar door* spell, using the wizard's notes, in the hope that the open gateway would attract the gacholoth into leaving the Prime Material plane once and for all. Any such attempt risks a chance of spell failure, just as an attempt to cast a high-level spell from a scroll does (see the *DMG*, page 145). If the PCs manage to cast the spell successfully, the gacholoth is quite willing to go through the doorway.

As a final challenge for the party, the gacholoth tries to grab one of the PCs (or an NPC) as it leaves. (Perhaps it is packing a picnic lunch.) The gacholoth must make a successful attack roll (with a −2 penalty) against its victim before carrying the unfortunate person away. Unless the held PC makes a successful bend bars roll, or the other PCs take appropriate action within one round, the gacholoth carries the PC through the *planar door* to the Outer Planes.

The remaining PCs must quickly decide whether to follow the gacholoth or abandon their friend, since the *planar door* will soon close. The DM should remember that the *planar door* spell opens a gateway to a random Outer Plane, so the PCs may find themselves pursuing the gacholoth through the Beastlands, Gehenna, or Ysgard (not necessarily a plane hostile to the PCs).

Although much of the information in Tyranthius's journal and notebook is inaccurate, PCs who find and keep these volumes may glean sufficient clues to check out the Outer Planes for themselves. This option provides gamers with a golden opportunity to enter the PLANESCAPE™ campaign setting. Ω

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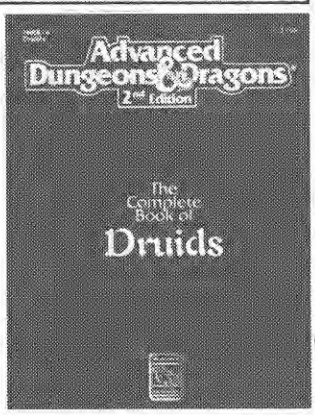

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Yugoloth, Lesser—Gacholoth

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Lower planes
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Very (11-12)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil
NO. APPEARING:	1-3
ARMOR CLASS:	−1
MOVEMENT:	24
HIT DICE:	9+9
THAC0:	11
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2 claws or 1 bite
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2-12/2-12 or 1-10
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Burning secretion, attack shock
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+1 or better weapon to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	40%
SIZE:	L (8′ tall)
MORALE:	Elite (13-14)
XP VALUE:	18,000

Gacholoths are the infiltrators and terrorists of the Blood War, using their abilities to cause havoc and spread panic behind the enemy lines. They spend months, years, even centuries serving in their temporary masters' armies with (apparently) unquestionable loyalty while secretly waiting for the best moment to reveal their true allegiance and begin their reign of slaughter and terror.

Gacholoths have a roughly humanoid appearance, their bodies as black as the hells from which they come. They have four long and powerful legs, each tipped with three sharp claws to aid in climbing. Their well-muscled torsos have two arms, each ending in four fingers tipped with savage, retractable claws. Their heads resembles those of monstrous sahuagin, with long fangs and cold, inhuman eyes.

Gacholoths communicate using telepathy.

Combat: Gacholoths are truly terrifying in battle. Their four legs enable them to move with blinding speed on any surface, climbing walls and ceilings without hindrance. They can fight from any angle, even hanging upside down. As a consequence of this speed and maneuverability, gacholoths always gain initiative in the first combat round. (Determine initiative in all subsequent rounds normally.) Gacholoths strike swiftly and savagely before their victims can react, then immediately withdraw from combat to hide until another opening presents itself.

Gacholoths never carry weapons, magical or otherwise, preferring instead to rely on the speed and ferocity of their natural weapons. The gacholoth can either strike with both claws (70% of the time), or take one bite (30%). The claws of the gacholoth secrete a stinging venom. Anyone hit by a claw attack must make a saving throw vs. poison or suffer an additional 1d6 hp burning damage.

This sudden and deadly attack has an additional effect. Anyone who faces a gacholoth attack for the first time (whether hit or not) must make a saving throw vs. paralyzation or suffer a form of attack shock. This shock resembles a *fear* spell and induces a similar irrational terror, but instead of running away, the victim drops all hand-held items and is rooted to the spot for 1-6 rounds. This attack shock is used to great effect by a gacholoth that wishes to play with its victim, initially paralyzing the poor unfortunate before returning to finish the job at its leisure. Regardless of whether or not the victim makes his saving throw the first time, any subsequent attack by the same gacholoth will not cause attack shock.

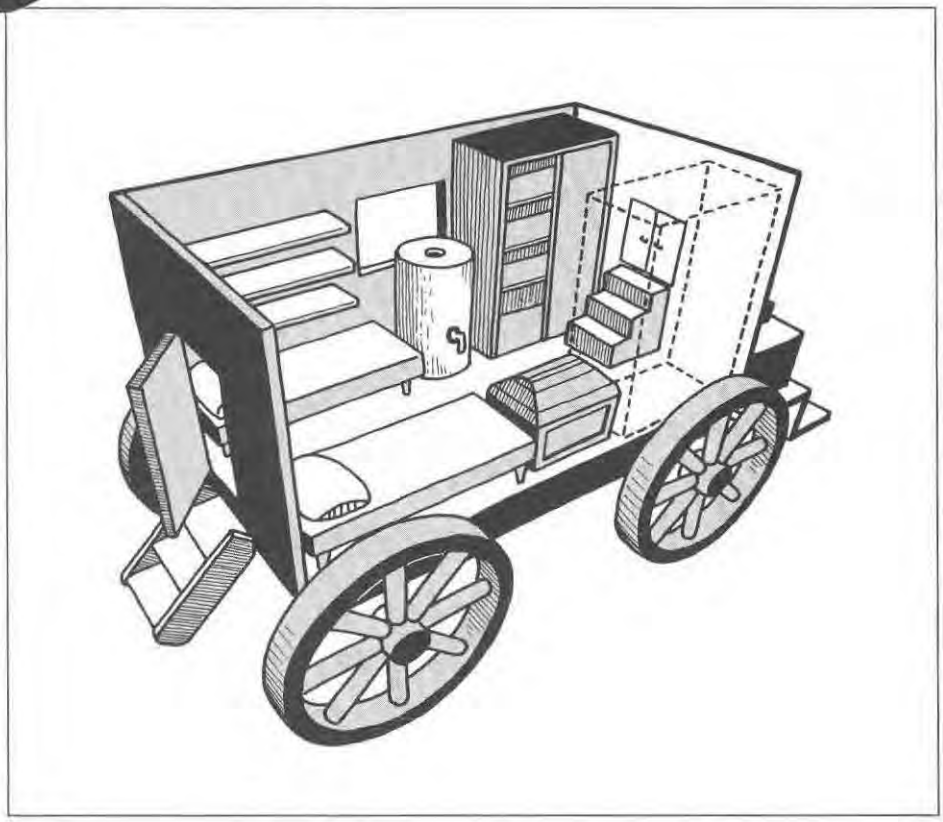
Alter self, animate dead, cause disease, charm person, improved phantasmal force, produce flame, teleport without error, and *gate* spells are available to all yugoloths. In addition, gacholoths have the following powers, at the 5th level of spell use, useable once per round, one at a time, at will: *darkness, 15′ radius, mirror image* (3× per day), *magic missile, feather fall.*

Gacholoths can see 90′ in normal darkness. They are unaffected by acid, poison, and *charm* spells. They take half damage from gas attacks, including poison gases, but double damage from cold-based attacks.

Habitat/Society: The gacholoths' fondness for deceit and terror make them favored troops in yugoloth conflicts, and many have risen to minor positions of power as a result.

Gacholoths have a particular interest in the workings of the Prime Material plane and will take any opportunity to enter there and indulge in a reign of bloodletting. Gacholoths consider themselves to be the great betrayers of the Outer Planes and will not allow others of similar skill to outdo them. They therefore have an immense hatred of succubi and erinyes, taking pleasure in torturing to death any such captives.

Ecology: No one has been able to determine the origin of these creatures. All gacholoths appear to be male; no distinctly female versions have ever been sighted. Their resemblance to sahuagin suggests some long-lost connection between these creatures and the "devil men of the deep," but hard evidence has yet to be discovered.



TWO FOR

Haunted, robbed, and swindled

BY TONY QUIRK

"Two for the Road" is an AD&D® SideTrek adventure for 2-6 player characters of levels 2-5 (no more than 9 total levels) of any class or alignment. It can be inserted into any campaign whenever the PCs are setting out to travel a long distance overland.

Adventure Background

The adventurers are in a city, looking for a means of transportation to carry them toward their next destination. They meet Bertucat, a human merchant who deals in horses and wagons. Fond of shaking hands and slapping backs, Bertucat is eager to strike a deal with the traveling adventurers and gladly engages them in conversation. After listening attentively to the PCs' latest exploits, he begins talking of the "good old days" when he too was a young adventurer. Not only does the merchant sell the PCs whatever they require, but he also offers them an old roofed wagon for a pittance. Built in the gypsy style, the wagon (though old) is still in fairly good condition. After considerable haggling, both sides can reach an agreement and the PCs find themselves the proud owners of a second-hand roofed wagon and some horses. Soon the PCs are once again on the road, headed for high adventure.

Bertucat: AL CN; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 6; dagger; pouch with 12 gp, 52 sp, 29 cp.

For the Dungeon Master

Unknown to the PCs, the old wagon has a reputation for being haunted. The merchant has rued the day he ever set eyes on it (he bought it from a family of frightened pilgrims), for the wagon has brought him nothing but trouble. Everyone who has ever bought it from him has returned, telling of hearing eerie whispers and laughter, and of seeing strange occurrences. Not willing to risk disturbing whatever spirit resides in the vehicle, or risk bringing its wrath down upon himself, Bertucat is reluctant to simply destroy the wagon. He seizes this chance to rid himself of the troublesome thing by selling it to travelers who will be long gone before discovering the wagon's peculiarities.

Unknown to the desperate dealer (and a long list of former occupants), the wagon is not haunted, but is inhabited by two mischievous gremlins.

Gremlins (2): INT very; AL CE; AC 4; MV 6, fly 18 (B); HD 4; hp 26, 14; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; MR 25%; SZ T (18" tall); ML 7; XP 650; MM/174.

The two creatures first climbed aboard the wagon when a passing caravan of pilgrims camped near their den. Quickly discovering a forgotten hidden compartment in the underside of the wagon, they made it their new home. Ever since, the pair have gleefully terrorized each occupant with their mischievous pranks and are now fully prepared to inflict their performance on the PCs.

There are two points to remember for this adventure to be successful. First, the purchase of the wagon should not seem any different from other such bargaining sessions. The entire exchange between Bertucat and the PCs can be role-played as heavily or as little as desired, keeping in mind that the sole purpose of the episode is to sell the wagon to the PCs without arousing their suspicions.

If the PCs are not biting, Bertucat concocts tales about his old adventuring days (lies!) and remarks how much the

THE ROAD

PCs remind him of his old comrades. He waxes eloquent about the "good old days" and remembers how long and difficult traveling was, while advising the PCs that it is in their best interest to be fully prepared. As a favor from a former adventurer, and because the PCs remind him so much of his old buddies, Bertucat is willing to sell his wagon at a discount. This should establish a camaraderie, gain the PCs' confidence, and ensure that they do, in fact, take the wagon off his hands.

The second point to remember is that there is no hurry. The gremlins' antics can start slowly, perhaps imperceptibly at first, becoming first an irritation, then a nuisance, and finally a recurring nightmare. It is not even important to distinguish the gremlins' pranks as an independent adventure. In fact, the mystery will be more successful if the PCs mistakenly connect the strange events with whatever main adventure they are pursuing. It may be quite some time before they discover that what is going on in their wagon is an entirely separate affair. Play on the PCs' fears and suspicions as much as possible.

The Wagon

Built to be pulled by two horses, the roofed wagon has two shuttered side windows and a rear door. The interior contains beds for two, a pantry, a closet, shelving, drawers, a water barrel, and a chest. The rear door can be locked from the outside with a padlock or barred on the inside with an oak bar. The front door, which separates the interior from the driver's seat, consists of two shutterlike windows set high on the wall, reached by a set of wooden steps. The double doors can be locked at night with a padlock; during the day, a drawn curtain provides privacy.

The gremlins make their lair inside a secret compartment that the wagon's gypsy builders originally used to hide contraband (or a fugitive) from the authorities. Entry is gained by pivoting the wooden steps upward; the resulting opening leads to a 3′ × 2½′ × 2½′ compartment below the driver's seat. Extending back from this area is a further hidden shelf, 1′ high, sandwiched between the inside floor and the wagon bottom. The hidden areas were entirely lined with padding and cloth by the gypsies to muffle any sounds that loose contraband might make. Discrepancies in wagon height and floor level are cleverly hidden by the faded trim surrounding the wagon.

The wooden stairs can be locked in place from inside the secret compartment by a small metal latch. A cleverly concealed hatch on the bottom of the compartment leads directly outside. The creatures thus have immediate access to both the inside of the wagon and the great outdoors.

The water barrel stands about 4′ high and has a spigot located a third of its height from the floor. The barrel can be refilled through a 3″ corked hole in the top. The chest is unlocked and empty. The drawers, shelves, closet, and pantry are all bare.

The Gremlins

Use the following table to generate the random activities of the gremlins. For the first week roll only once per day, then twice a day during the second week. Increase the number of events per week until the antics of the gremlins drive the PCs to despair. Do not, however, allow the table to constrain your imagination. If an opportunity arises that the gremlins can exploit, then allow them to do so.

1d20	Event
1	Door locked on inside/outside
2	Window shutters opened/closed
3	Food taken/thrown about wagon
4	PC personal item taken
5	Weapon taken
6	Missing item reappears inside wagon
7	Missing item reappears outside wagon
8	Whispers/laughter heard
9	Drawers opened/contents scattered
10	Item moved conspicuously out of place
11	Items thrown about inside wagon
12	Rapping on walls
13	One or more axle pins taken from wagon wheels
14	Wagon suddenly shakes
15	Tambourine (or other musical instrument) played
16	Inside of wagon ransacked
17	Outside campsite ransacked
18	Familiar or horse(s) frightened
19	Item broken
20	Magical item discharged one or more times

Any time the two gremlins steal anything from the PCs, they do so solely for play and then, tiring of it, go on quickly to something else. The smaller of the two is fond of bright, shiny objects, while his older brother enjoys playing with tools such as weapons, instruments, or magical items. Neither has a penchant for outright destruction, for they realize that the wagon is their home and the PCs are their meal ticket. They do on occasion break things when frustrated in their attempts at play. For example, after using up all of the charges in a *wand of frost* (and turning the PCs' campsite into a winter wonderland), the gremlins may break the wand because it no longer functions. The two hide anything they steal in their hidden lair in the lower shelf below the wagon bed.

Gremlins are nocturnal creatures, so most of their activities occur at night. They are especially active when all (or most) of the PCs are absent or have their attention focused elsewhere.

Red Herrings

A close search of the chest reveals a false bottom. In the secret drawer that pulls out to the right side, the PCs can find a woman's kerchief, a gold earring (5 gp), a small framed painting depicting an old gypsy woman, and a tambourine. The kerchief and earring match those worn by the woman in the painting. None of these items are magical; they are forgotten possessions of the wagon's original owner. The ever-restless gremlin pranksters are aware of the secret drawer and enjoy playing with its contents, especially the tambourine. Once they discover the secret drawer, the PCs may create any number of theories connecting the old woman, the items, and the strange happenings in the wagon.

Concluding the Adventure

The PCs should discover the gremlins eventually. Cowards that they are, the creatures flee without offering any resistance. If discovered outside the wagon, they try to return unseen to their lair and lay low. If the pair are caught inside their tiny room, they attempt to escape through the opposite exit. Once their hideout is found, the gremlins leave for good to search for a new dwelling. If cornered, they defend themselves and attack the weakest opponent in an attempt to break free.

The gremlins have no treasure in their hideaway except any items they have stolen from the PCs.

Tony recently graduated from San Diego State University with a B.A. in history. He would like to dedicate his first adventure in this magazine to his mother, for enduring all those arguments he and his brothers had over "that game" so many years ago.

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difficult to track down a "dwarven" barber, even if dwarves are common in the campaign. However, Cervate moves around a lot, so the PC may always be one step behind the conjurer.

Even if the PC finds Cervate, the wizard may not be easy to kill. Cervate has many spells to aid his escape from any serious confrontation. The DM should consider using Cervate as an occasional thorn in the PC's side. As the PC grows in power, so will Cervate and his spell capabilities. The conjurer may even develop a more powerful summoning spell that can affect a higher-level PC. As long as Cervate has the proper material components, the PC will be vulnerable.

Other adventures can arise from this situation. Another wizard might hear of Cervate's accomplishments and come looking for a copy of the spell. If Cervate summons the PC to deal with this problem, the adventurer could suddenly find himself on the bad side of a powerful wizard. Or, if the evil conjurer summons the PC to help him commit some nefarious act, the adventurer may find himself in trouble with the law for a crime he had no control over. Imagine what problems this could cause for a paladin.

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LENNY O'BRIEN'S POT O'GOLD

BY J. LEE CUNNINGHAM

Trouble at the end of the rainbow

Artwork by Tony DiTerlizzi

Lee writes: "I teach English in Alexandria, Virginia. I'd like to thank Brian "Bunzel" Alt for playtesting this adventure, as well as Willie Walsh for his advice on avoiding publishing pitfalls. Finally, a special thanks goes to my dear friend Jacki Moses for her editorial assistance. I hope that her leprechaun nightmares cease soon."

"Lenny O'Brien's Pot O'Gold" is an AD&D® adventure for 3-5 player characters of levels 3-6 (about 18 total levels). Because this adventure's main adversaries are immune to normal forms of attack, the party should include a wizard (preferably below 5th level) and a magical weapon or two.

The adventure takes place in Willow Wood, a small forest off the beaten path, which has been the source of wary speculation for many years. Although Willow Wood is not actually enchanted, its remote location and eerie appearance play on the imagination of many a seasoned traveler. Ironically, the grove is free of fairie influence, except for one resident. If the DM wants to incorporate this adventure into one of the enchanted areas of the campaign world, Willow Wood easily lends itself to such conversion.

Since the main threat of this scenario—mudmen's ability to slow and suffocate PCs—depends on an individual's speed, the DM is strongly encouraged to review the Movement Rate of each PC. PCs with lower Movement Rates—dwarves, gnomes, halflings, and heavily armored fighters—may find this adventure frustrating, if not deadly. To offset their disadvantage, the DM should make sure that the PCs have useful lifesaving items like ropes and staves.

Adventure Background

For the past few years, a roguish leprechaun by the name of Lenny O'Brien has called the charming forest of Willow Wood his home. With row after row of weeping willow trees shading the banks of the forest's meandering stream, the wood's exotic appearance and outlying locale have contributed to the fears of many victims of his practical jokes. Lenny's primary reason for calling the willow-shaded glade home, however, has always been the spectacular fishing along the banks of the stream he calls the Winder. Lenny, unlike most leprechauns, would much rather spend his days pulling fat trout from a stream

instead of dancing and cavorting about. In fact, by leprechaun standards, Lenny is quite eccentric. It was his obsession with fishing that forced him to leave the security of his former leprechaun clan in the first place. (Leprechauns can tolerate just about any tale of lighthearted deception and trickery, but fish stories of "the one that got away" soon wear very thin with the impish folk.)

After returning from one of his frequent fishing excursions, Lenny was confronted with the news that he must renounce his ridiculous hobby and resume the proper deportment for a leprechaun or leave the comfort and comradeship of his own kind. In Lenny's eyes, this was no choice at all. Much to the rest of the clan's dismay, the diminutive angler quickly gathered up his favorite pole, pipe, and pot of gold, and headed out in search of the perfect fishing hole.

Lenny traveled for weeks, always searching for the ideal fishing spot. His journey carried him to many waters that would have sufficed for the average angler; however, Lenny was far from average. The sites were always either too sunny or too dark. They were either too close to civilization or not close enough so that Lenny might partake in the enjoyment of an occasional prank or two. Worst of all, either they didn't maintain enough fish or boasted such unworthy opponents that no self-respecting fisherman would dare disgrace his pole by attempting to pull one of the simple creatures ashore.

What Lenny needed was a place where the fish were fat but not too lazy, a place where shady trees cooled the waters during the hottest portion of the afternoon but let the sun filter through during the cooler stretches of the day. It was a quest that seemed utterly hopeless, but just when Lenny was about to pack in his rod and tackle box forever, the little bait-caster stumbled across the fishing spot of his dreams. Lenny pushed his way past a thick line of trees and strolled right into the midst of Willow Wood's sparkling stream.

Everything was exactly as he had envisioned on so many restless, fishless nights. A brisk current rolled through a shaded grove, but it was not so brisk as to disturb the abundance of purplish moss clinging to the rocks of the stream. The purple vegetation encouraged schools of rainbow trout to fight the swift flow of a nearby waterfall, for the rainbows dearly loved the taste of the strange moss and struggled to avoid being swept downstream. Lenny quickly determined that the moss was magical, and although it appeared to provide the trout with a cunning he had never before experienced, he had no doubt that a master fisherman such as himself could bring the beauties flopping to the grassy bank. Lenny, who had never been wrong in a matter regarding fish, was soon rewarded with the toughest and most thrilling catch of his life. After a journey that had almost broken him, Lenny O'Brien had come home.

Before he allowed himself to get swept up in a fishing fervor, Lenny searched for a place to secure his *pot of holding*, the magical iron pot that contained the savings he had accumulated between countless fishing trips. Before long, Lenny discovered the perfect hiding place for his gold and gems.

On the very edge of the babbling brook stood a tree that was charming, yet practical. The old willow's trunk, hollowed into an interior that was both comfortable and secure, was the perfect place for Lenny to set up housekeeping. With a base that could be easily shaped into a small den, kitchen, and bedchamber, the tree seemed to fit even the most selective of leprechaun needs. The tree was perfect. The stream was perfect. Everything—even the nearby but not well-traveled road—was perfect. Lenny could desire nothing more and quickly placed his pot of gold in the tree's hollow interior.

Lenny's happiness was undisturbed for many, many years. He never tired of inventing new ways of catching the stream's moss trout, which he had named for the purple moss, and the rainbows never seemed to tire of devising new ways to avoid Lenny's line. The waterfall always seemed to keep the trout so fit that catching a single trout provided Lenny with hours of fight and fun. When Lenny grew a little tired of fishing—which wasn't very often—the road occasionally provided some amusing diversion from travelers watering their mounts at the Winder's edge. The only thing that Lenny's cherished glade lacked was wine, and even that was just an inconvenience—he could always steal a bottle from a small farm about a day's journey north. Besides, the farm contained a pond with some of the biggest catfish Lenny had ever seen, a suitable break from landing crafty moss trout day after day.

It was during one of his wine-stealing excursions that tragedy struck Lenny's world. While he was away, a quick and violent flood ripped through the Winder, tearing Lenny's tree (and his *pot of holding*) from the embankment. When Lenny returned from his brief sojourn, he discovered that his happy hiding place had become the site of a catastrophe. Surveying the wreckage of the uprooted willow and the despoiled streambed, Lenny observed that his *pot of holding* had gone downstream along with most of the purple moss and moss trout. He wasn't too concerned about the loss of moss or fish, for he knew that the remaining moss would quickly cover the streambed and that spawning trout would eventually replenish The Winder. His gold, however, was another matter. Lenny, realizing that his magical *pot of holding* would secure his wealth until the gold was physically plucked from its depths, immediately began his search. Following in the wake of the flood's destruction, Lenny scanned the stream for his treasure.

Fortunately for the little fellow, he didn't have to travel very far before he discovered his pot of gold. Unfortunately, the pot had been tossed over a small waterfall and into a rather deep pool (well, deep for a leprechaun anyway). To make matters worse, swimming had never been one of Lenny's strong suits. Poor Lenny was left with the bothersome task of diverting the stream's course around the waterfall and pool, and the even more irksome job of draining the lifeless pool itself. (The trout and moss had been washed farther downstream.) Lenny quickly used his ability to *polymorph* nonliving objects, and what little carpentry skill he possessed, to create an aqueduct that sent the stream spilling beyond the confines of the pool. Lenny next used his abilities to fashion a crude bellows-pump and proceeded to drain the pool. This last feat almost took the leprechaun out of Lenny. When the pool was drained, Lenny, hating the prospect of getting muddy almost as much as that of going swimming, wasted no time casting his line at his treasure, which had sunk slightly into the pool's muddy bottom. Strangely, the pot stayed wedged in the mud even after Lenny hooked it with a superb cast.

Forced to step into the pool's muddy basin, Lenny realized too late that his *pot of holding*'s magic had molded the

muddy depression into a pool of a dozen mudmen. To make matters worse, the mudmen seemed immune to Lenny's attempts at *invisibility, illusion,* and *ventriloquism.* The mudmen were so impervious to Lenny's tricks, antics that had served Lenny well for centuries, that the less than courageous leprechaun barely escaped with his skin. Clawing his way out of the pool, all Lenny could do was turn and watch his beloved pot slip below the surface as the mudmen melted back into the mud. Shortly thereafter, Lenny realized that he would need a bit of help to retrieve his gold.

Lenny thought his prayers were answered when he spotted a band of adventurers coming up the road. Lenny quickly stepped out of the woods and eagerly waved the party down. He was breathlessly chattering on about how much he needed their help and the nice reward he would offer when several of the adventurers grabbed him. Swords were drawn and threats made, and Lenny realized that his ability to judge big folks' character had obviously diminished with years of fishing.

Lenny's captors promised immediate torture if he didn't lead them to his treasure. If the rogues hadn't been so quick to apprehend Lenny, they would have heard his tale of the displaced pot of gold, but as it was, Lenny swore to himself that he would never divulge the treasure's location. Yet Lenny had no desire to experience even the slightest bit of discomfort at the hands of his kidnappers, so he quickly informed them that he could produce bright gold from thin air for anyone *wishing* him to do so. The bandits fell for Lenny's trap and quickly ordered him to do so. Lenny answered his captors' *wish* by creating illusory piles of gold at their feet. He was careful not to make the piles too generous, so the bandits would demand more. After he had answered three more of the greedy fools' *wishes,* Lenny was able to enact a portion of Leprechaun Law that allows a captured leprechaun to reverse all previous *wishes* and *teleport* away anyone who asks for a fourth *wish.* This *teleportation* is instantaneous, sending the wishers 2-40 miles away and preventing the teleportees from ever finding the leprechaun's glade again.

Once the villains were disposed of, Lenny reasoned that he would have to find a way of enlisting the next band of adventurers' aid without risking either himself or his gold. It didn't take Lenny long to realize that if the adventurers had to retrieve something valuable of their own from the mud pool, his problem with the mudmen would be resolved. Since his *pot of holding* was hidden from view beneath the mud, the next party need never know of the pot's existence or the help they would inadvertently provide. Lenny hid near the road's waystop, a picnic area often used by travelers, and has remained there for a week now.

For the Dungeon Master

Since Lenny has experienced big folk treachery first hand, he will take every precaution to ensure that he remains out of reach for the entire adventure. His only concern is to steal an item from the party, one that will lure the adventurers into combat with the mudmen as soon as possible. Although Lenny can't identify the exact powers of magical items, his enchanted nature gives him an innate ability to sense magic. He concentrates his efforts on a magical item that is visible and easy to steal. For example, Lenny would have no idea that a magic wand was stored in a backpack, but he would stand a fair chance of acquiring a magical dagger. Also, consider Lenny's size when selecting the item to be stolen. Lenny can carry off wands, scrolls, spell books, daggers, short swords, and even long swords, but a two-handed sword or a suit of armor is out of the question.

When Lenny flees from the PCs, the leprechaun's speed and knowledge of the forest give him an edge. The PCs will not be able to catch him before he reaches the waterfall without magical assistance, such as a potion of *haste* or *boots of speed.* PCs who attack Lenny with missile weapons will be very disappointed, because Lenny's ability to dodge behind trees and become *invisible* at will makes the leprechaun an extremely difficult target (−4 to armor class when invisible, with modifiers for cover if he dodges behind a tree). As for spells, Lenny is 80% resistant to magic.

If Lenny fails in his first attempt, he will not try to steal anything else from the party but will observe their behavior. If the PCs seem civil about the whole affair (refraining from casting additional spells or shooting missile weapons, and foregoing continued pursuit), Lenny promises three *wishes* in an attempt to enlist the PCs' aid. If the party accepts, they may even use one *wish* to recover his pot of gold, though Lenny himself won't suggest this (he doesn't like fulfilling *wishes* and thinks about them as little as possible). If the party refuses Lenny's offer, the leprechaun will wait for the next group of adventurers to come along. Unless the party decides to search the forest for Lenny, who continues to flee toward the mud pool, the adventure ends.

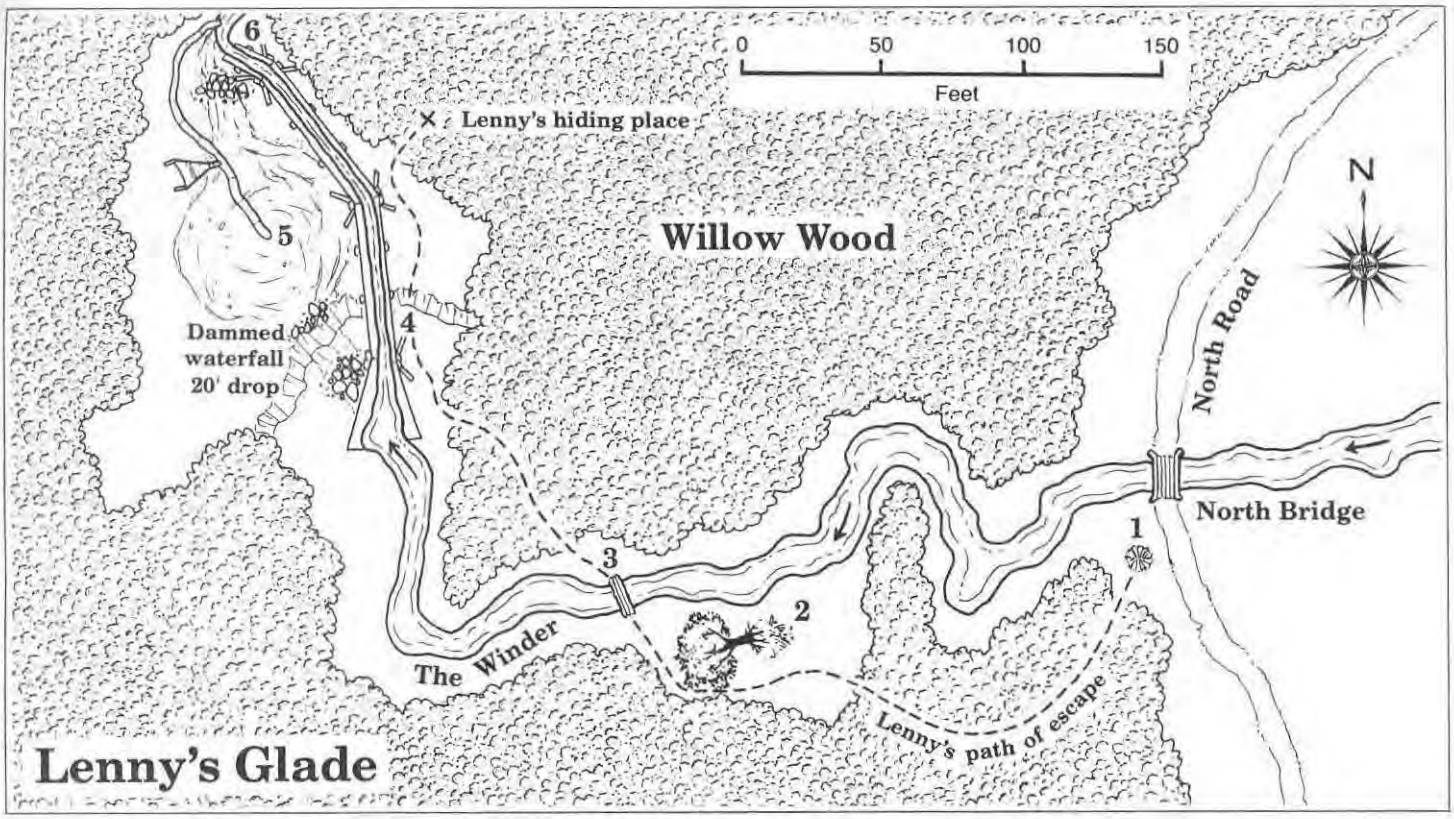
Lenny's plan has a few major flaws, even if the theft is successful. The mudmen tend to stir up the pool each time they assume a physical shape, so Lenny's *pot of holding* occasionally rises to the surface. Also, the mudmen refuse to relinquish the very thing that has given them life. When the adventurers step into the mud pool to retrieve their stolen item, they are likely to spot the copper pot as it surfaces from its muddy hiding place along with attacking mudmen. Most adventurers will try to take the pot, perhaps to use as a bargaining chip with Lenny.

The party will be hard pressed to retrieve the pot without first defeating the mudmen. In fact, once the party catches a glimpse of Lenny's gold, the leprechaun will take steps to see that the PCs defeat the mudmen without retrieving his treasure. An *invisible* Lenny *polymorphs* grappling lines into brittle strands of grass. Once the mudmen are defeated, Lenny creates illusions of additional mudmen to keep the party busy while he races in and retrieves his property. However, if things look really bleak for Lenny's gold, the leprechaun offers three minor *wishes* for his treasure. (Of course, there is always the possibility that the PCs will be as gullible and greedy as the first group, falling for the fourth *wish* ploy and permitting Lenny to reverse all his *wishes* and *teleport* the whole party far from his glade.)

Beginning the Adventure

1. The Waystop. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> The picnic area and the nearby stream to the north offers the ideal spot to rest from your long journey. Although the emerald glade to the west provokes an eerie dread, the kind most often associated with



places of dark mystery, the well-used picnic site assures you that other travelers have stopped in this very place without incident. As you make preparations for an enjoyable noon meal, you soon turn your attention away from the unsettling forest. However, just as you are about to serve lunch, [*insert name of a PC*] lets out a bellowing shriek. As you turn around, your party is greeted by the sight of a 2'-tall manlike creature, dressed a tweed suit and green fishing cap, darting into the forest with [*PC's magical item*].

"Oh, me buckos, you'll have to be sharper than the last bunch of armed scoundrels if you wish to keep up with Lenny O'Brien," laughs the little fellow as he turns with a bow and removes his tweed fishing cap ceremoniously. Faster than a wink, the tiny man plunges deeper into the emerald wood.

Lenny O'Brien, leprechaun: INT exceptional; AL N; AC 8; MV 15; HD 2-5 hp; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA *polymorph* nonliving objects, create illusions, *ventriloquism* at will; SD never surprised, become *invisible* at will; MR 80%; SZ T (2' tall); ML 11; XP 270; MM/220.

If the PCs give chase, they discover that the forest floor, covered with slippery moss and entwined with roots, hinders their speed (reducing Movement Rates by 2). Lenny, on the other hand, suffers no such penalty; he knows the location of every jutting root and slick spot along the path. Since Lenny will probably be moving faster than any member of the party, he will have to wait for the pursuing PCs at various points along the path. He doesn't want to be too obvious, so he will fake a stumble or turn to taunt the PCs. The whole chase shouldn't take more than four rounds.

If a PC gets too close during the chase—by using a potion of *quickness, boots of speed,* or some other magic—Lenny will create an illusion to divert the PCs' pursuit. He might, for instance, conjure up an illusory twin of the stolen item on the forest floor, or a fleeing clone of himself. The DM should give Lenny every opportunity to lure the PCs into the forest without allowing the party to get too close. Moreover, the DM should make it almost impossible for the adventurers to catch Lenny before he reaches the waterfall (area 4). If the PCs manage the impossible, the DM should role-play a desperate Lenny, who begs for forgiveness and asks for the party's aid in recovering his lost treasure. At this point he will explain his distrust for the party due to his run-in with the bandits. If the PCs volunteer their help, award a 300-XP bonus to the first volunteer. If the PCs are unmoved by Lenny's dilemma, the leprechaun offers a reward (about 500 gold pieces) for the party's assistance. The offer and Lenny's capture, however, should be a rare thing, an event worthy of only the most ingenious of adventurers. Parties unable to capture the leprechaun might be able to coax him into revealing his plight through skillful questioning. (Just what did Lenny meant by "the last batch of armed scoundrels"?) The DM should role-play to determine the adventurers' success at getting the truth out of Lenny. The PC who successfully quizzes the leprechaun should gain a 200-XP bonus.

Lenny does have one obvious weak

spot. If one of the PCs notices his fishing hat and decides to slow Lenny down with stories of fishing, the leprechaun may converse with the PCs from a safe distance (75% chance). The speaker must be either a bard or a fisherman (a PC with the fishing proficiency or secondary skill) in order to capture Lenny's attention, for only an expert fisherman or a bard with knowledge of the waters can spin tales to enthrall the likes of Lenny. Ask the player to tell a tall tale, and take into account the PC's Charisma and bardic skill, if any. If the tale seems interesting, outrageous, or knowledgeable, Lenny will ask for the party's help in recovering his gold. If the player is too shy or slow to spin a tale, roll a reaction check instead to determine Lenny's response.

2. Lenny's Tree.

Stepping out of the willow forest, you plunge directly into a shaded clearing. The stream winds through the clearing and snakes deeper into the lush wood. The leprechaun is nowhere in sight. However, a hollow willow tree, obviously the victim of some recent catastrophe, lies uprooted a few feet from its former resting place. A few small pieces of broken furniture and assorted fishing gear, made for someone quite small, lie scattered here and there. Just as you're about to investigate further, you hear a faint chuckle coming from downstream.

Listening to the musical laughter roll in from the center of the forest, you hear, "Over here, my friends. Oh no! You'll not catch Lenny O'Brien looking that way, don't ya know?"

Nothing of real value remains in Lenny's uprooted home. What the flash flood did not wash downstream, it ruined completely. If the adventurers decide to investigate the tree instead of Lenny's laughter, all they will find is a torn and muddied vest, spoiled food, a few broken pieces of diminutive furniture, and assorted fishing gear. However, the discovery of the fishing equipment might spur a PC with fishing proficiency to attempt a fishing conversation with Lenny. A smart player will soon figure out that fishing tales are a great way to win Lenny's trust (or keep him talking).

3. The Log Bridge.

As you trot farther down the path, you come to a small log bridge spanning the stream, which seems to be picking up speed here. Leaning casually against the other side of the bridge, Lenny smiles and beckons your party with a wave. Still clutching his new prize, Lenny bolts into the forest on the far side of the stream, laughing all the way.

In preparation for his pursuit, Lenny loosened most of the lashes on the log bridge a week ago, so the bridge now forms an excellent obstacle. Only the center log remains secure, to provide Lenny with the perfect means of escape. PCs blundering over the bridge must each make Dexterity checks at a −7 penalty or be tossed harmlessly into the rolling, winding stream. Although the current is fairly swift, the stream is only 1½′ deep, and several smooth rocks a few feet downstream provide the perfect anchorage for pulling soaked PCs from the Winder. Because Lenny feels that the PCs will have more success against the mudmen if they are angry, the bridge trap is meant to serve as a nuisance rather than a hindrance. Besides, it provides Lenny with extra time to set up the next stage of his plan: placing the stolen item in the mud pool and then hiding in a prepared observation point.

4. The Waterfall and Aqueduct.

Proceeding downstream, you reach the crest of a small waterfall. The waterfall's glade would make a peaceful sight, but someone has dammed the stream. A makeshift aqueduct diverts the current around the waterfall's basin, which is now empty and muddy. A large bellows-pump, obviously used to drain the pool, rests next to the aqueduct's gushing northern end. The stream resumes its normal course at the end of the aqueduct. Lying in the middle of the mired basin is [*name of PC's magical item*].

PCs trying to retrieve the stolen item using ropes or spells are in for a disap-

pointment. Not only do the mudmen refuse to relinquish Lenny's *pot of holding*, they view any item tossed into the mud pool as theirs and will fight to keep it. Attempts to lasso or *levitate* the item reveal that it is immovable. The mudmen can sense attempts to remove anything from their domain and secretly clutch at the item from below the surface or roll the pot over until all lassos, hooks, and other tools slip off. The mudmen's hidden grasp isn't clearly visible, so the DM can tell cowboy PCs that the item is too slippery to be snagged or too deeply embedded in the mud to be pulled free.

A rope dangles from the aqueduct's top and extends 20' below to the bottom of the waterfall. Although this is Lenny's escape route, the adventurers stand little chance of spotting the *invisible* leprechaun's hiding place in the adjacent trees. The only exception is a party with a *detect invisibility* spell, which automatically finds Lenny if the wizard looks in the right direction.

5. The Mud Pool.

> This muddy basin slopes gently down to a depression of what was once the waterfall's pool. The mud looks slippery and glistens with a strange violet hue. In the center of the basin, you can see [*name of PC's magical item*].

Make a secret Wisdom check for all rangers and PCs with tracking proficiency. If the check is successful, the PC not only spots Lenny's footprints where he left the pool, but he can also determine that the prints are several days old. This clue may prompt the PCs to investigate the pool more thoroughly before entering.

Movement in the mud pool is halved for all PCs who do not possess a ring or spell of *free action.* This movement penalty does not affect combat or armor class, but it does affect a PC's ability to retrieve items from the pool. Movement losses from mudman attacks are taken out of the character's full Movement Rate, not the halved rate. Because the mudmen try to hold onto dropped items, the PC must spend one round struggling to free the item from their grasp, then roll a successful Strength check in order to retrieve the item. An adventurer with a Movement Rate of 12 who tries to recover the stolen item spends one round getting into the mud pool, another freeing the item, and a third retreating from the pool. Of course, the mudmen are likely to encase the adventurer's body in mud during this time, reducing his Movement Rate. As a result, the PC might end up spending more time in the mud pool than he expected. For example, an elf with a standard Movement Rate of 12 enters the mud, and her Movement Rate is cut in half. If she suffers six successful mudmen attacks she will still possess a Movement Rate of 3 (12 – 6 = 6; half of 6 is 3). Five more attacks would be required to reduce her Movement Rate to 1.

The mudmen view the area just above the pool's surface as part of their domain. Adventurers experiencing difficulty retrieving the item by ropes, grappling hooks, poles, or other tools may believe a *fly* spell is the answer to their prayers. Although this spell can certainly help the PC retrieve the item or Lenny's pot of gold, it will not save the PC from being attacked as he hovers a few feet over the mud pool. One advantage of a *fly* spell, however, is that it eliminates the movement penalty inflicted by the muddy pool.

Once the adventurers have given up on long-distance salvage attempts and stepped into the mud pool, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> Stepping into the muddy basin, you struggle to keep your balance. The slimy bottom of the drained pool seems to squirm with your every step, forcing you to throw your arms out in an awkward effort to keep yourself from falling. After a few moments, the task seems easier, and your heart quickens as you approach the object of your pursuit. The quest has left your party dirty and frustrated, but it is about to come to an end. However, just as you come within grasp of your goal, the muddy floor beneath your feet swirls around you. You watch in horror as muddy humanoid shapes surround the item and you.

As stated previously, the *pot of holding*'s magic created the colony of mudmen, who guard their mud pool and Lenny's pot of gold. However, the purple moss has added a new twist to this colony's ecology: an enhanced intelligence that makes the recovery of the pot of gold or the stolen item even more difficult. The moss gives the mudmen the ability to comprehend the source of the pool's creation and the dangers posed to the pool from outside sources.

Mudmen (12): INT low; AL N; AC 10; MV 3; HD 2; hp 16 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg special; SA mud throwing, suffocation; SD +1 or better weapon to hit, spell immunity; SZ S (4' high); ML 14; XP 125; MM/260 (modified).

What mudmen lack in raw attack power, they make up for with their ability to harm PCs through special skills and defenses. Individual mudmen can be harmed only when they have coalesced from the mud pool, and then only by magical weapons. In addition, poison and mind-influencing spells (such as *hold, charm, command,* and *sleep*) have no effect on them. Physical spells cast directly on the inactive mud pool will affect the mudmen, but the damage is divided among all the mudmen in the pool. A wizard inflicting 12 hp damage to the mud pool delivers only 1 hp damage to each mudman in the pool. Lastly, although the mudmen cannot harm PCs physically or mentally, their mud-slinging attacks lower a PC's Movement Rate by one point for each hit. Once a mudman gets within 10' of the victim, it may hurl itself at the victim. If this attack is successful, the creature is destroyed, but its assault reduces the victim's Movement Rate by 4. This attack is perhaps the most debilitating and deadly, for a PC unable to move suffocates, taking 1-8 hp damage per round until the mouth or nose is clear. Although the PC's air passages can be cleared in a single round, an immobilized victim will suffocate to death as per the rules for holding one's breath (*Player's Handbook,* page 122) unless someone comes to his aid. Hardened mud on the rest of the body can be broken away, restoring one point of movement per five rounds spent clearing.

If the battle goes badly for the adventurers, the party may decide to pull back and regroup, attacking the mudmen from a distance. This strategy, however, has several flaws. One: The creatures sink beneath the pool's surface as soon as the last PC leaves their domain. Two: Items like Lenny's pot of gold and the PCs' stolen object have a 50% chance of sinking when the mudmen retreat, dragged down by the muddy currents. Three: One destroyed mudman reforms each hour. This ability, not found in normal mudmen colonies, comes from the combination of the

magic in Lenny's *pot of holding* and the purple moss. Four: This group of mudmen rise up and toss mudballs at PCs who try to dismantle the aqueduct. Flooding the pool does not destroy the mudman colony, and Lenny will help the mudmen defend the aqueduct. The mudmen ensure that their pool remains perfectly muddy.

PCs in the mud pool when the mudmen first assume their humanoid form must check for surprise; surprised adventurers are at the mercy of the mudmen for one round. If Lenny's gold rises to the top of the mud pool (50% chance each time the mudmen resurface), four of the mudmen surround and defend the magical pot.

More than likely, the adventurers will have to fight to retrieve the stolen item or Lenny's *pot of holding*. However, if the PCs make an obvious effort to acquire the leprechaun's gold, Lenny will do everything in his power to ensure that the PCs don't walk off with his treasure. The heroes' belts might suddenly be *polymorphed* into strings of dry leaves, causing pants to fall and adventurers to stumble in the mud. More persistent groups might find themselves fighting illusory mudmen until they stop trying to reach Lenny's gold.

Regardless of whether or not the PCs recover the stolen item, if the PCs defeat the mudmen and abandon Lenny's gold, the leprechaun runs into the mud pool, grabs his *pot of holding,* and takes off into the woods. The leprechaun resettles farther downstream, rebuilding his home near the thickest patches of purple moss and the largest moss trout.

After the PCs have retrieved the stolen object, the adventurers may decide that destroying the aqueduct is the best way to eliminate the mudmen. Unless Lenny has obtained his *pot of holding,* he will try to prevent this, for the aqueduct's destruction will entomb Lenny's treasure under mud and water. Moreover, even if the pool is drained again, the mudmen will reform before the pot can be reclaimed. Since Lenny doesn't want to repeat the whole process of draining the pool, a party that tries to demolish the aqueduct is likely to find its axes *polymorphed* into sunflowers and its hammers into fresh squash.

If the PCs have demonstrated honorable intentions toward Lenny's treasure, leaving the pot for Lenny and taking only their "borrowed item" from the pool, the leprechaun will secretly reward the PCs with several items from his *pot of holding*. The adventurers wake up the next morning to discover the following items placed in the middle of their camp: 200 gold pieces, a potion of *heroism,* a scroll of *protection from ghouls,* and the stolen item, if it was not recovered. This reward might seem overly generous for a leprechaun, but Lenny's *pot of holding*—an item that can hold 500 lbs. with only 15 lbs. of encumbrance—contains 3,574 gold pieces and several other magical items that the little angler finds much more useful. (The DM can select two additional magical items from the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, in keeping with Lenny's character.) However, if the adventurers persist in pursuing Lenny's gold, and the little fellow's treasure seems in desperate danger of being taken, Lenny offers the PCs three *limited wishes* in return for the treasure—providing, of course, that the PCs first save the treasure from the mudmen. Once Lenny has his pot in hand, he grants the adventurers their *wishes,* but he attempts to steer them toward a fourth *wish,* enabling him to reverse all the other *wishes* and *teleport* the PCs away from Willow Wood. This will certainly annoy and frustrate the players, but the PCs will learn something useful for the next time they run across a leprechaun.

6. The Aqueduct's Drain. The Winder continues on its course at this point, and the PCs will discover little out of the ordinary. Anyone proceeding downstream for about a mile can find the displaced purple moss and moss trout. Mud-caked PCs can use the aqueduct's spout as a makeshift shower, doubling their rate of mud cleaning (restoring two points of movement per five rounds spent under the spout).

Concluding the Adventure

The adventure's conclusion depends largely on the PCs' actions throughout the scenario. Greedy PCs will be *teleported* 2d20 miles distant from Lenny's glade after requesting a fourth *wish.* They are unable to find Lenny's glade again, and the adventure is over.

If the party manages to walk off with the leprechaun's treasure without falling for Lenny's *wish* ploy, Lenny plagues the group with a series of illusions, tricks, and practical jokes until the *pot of holding* is relinquished. This assault might sound like nothing more than a nuisance at first, until the PCs ride into the next village to discover that Lenny has raced ahead of them, placing wanted posters with their descriptions all over town.

If the adventurers conduct themselves with honor, Lenny might well become an invaluable NPC, a source of information about faerie realms and doings. As long as the PCs don't try to find Lenny's new home or overuse his services, the leprechaun will pass along information such as the location of a green dragon's lair or the plight of a dryad who is attempting to save her tree from a rampaging fire elemental. The possibilities for Lenny as a unique NPC are endless. However, Lenny should be the one who occasionally searches out the PCs, not the other way around. Faerie creatures lose their mystery if they are too easily found. Ω

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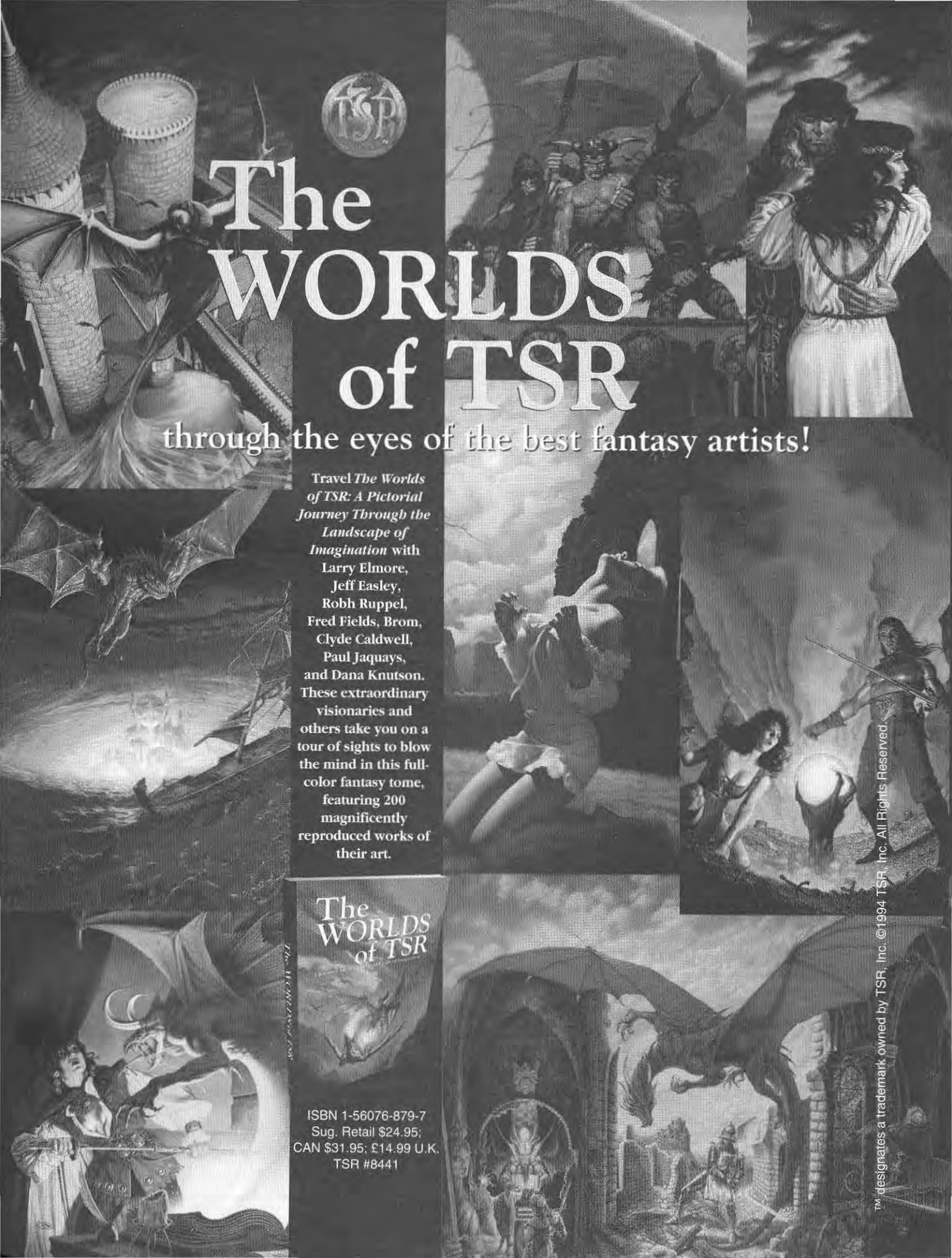
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NORTH OF NARBOREL

BY CHRISTOPHER PERKINS & BOB WALDBAUER

Set sail for the unknown.

Artwork by Tony DiTerlizzi

Chris Perkins writes: "Some of the most memorable adventures come from modules which we adapt from other resources. The origins of "Narborel" date back to 1982, yet the module's premise is still an exciting one. Thanks to Paul Culotta and his players for daring to face the dreaded dragon turtle, and special thanks to Bob Waldbauer for bringing ol' Shellback to life over 10 years ago."

The editors believe that Bob Waldbauer has been devoured by the Seapoint Triangle. Anyone aware of his current position should inform the dockmasters at DUNGEON Magazine.

"North of Narborel" is an AD&D® adventure designed for 4-6 player characters of levels 4-7 (about 25 total levels). The party should include as many different character classes as possible, with an emphasis on warriors. The party may also contain henchmen and hirelings.

This module is a revision of Bob Waldbauer's "Can Seapoint be Saved?" which appeared in DRAGON® Magazine, issue #75 (July 1983). A DM who wants to insert this module into an existing world needs two seaports and some islands along a lengthy stretch of ocean coastline.

The adventure begins shortly after the party arrives in Narborel, a town near the seacoast. The PCs may arrive by land or sea, depending on campaign circumstances. Despite the threat of pirates in this module, ocean-going travel is not yet dangerous; the chance that the party's ship will be raided on its way to Narborel is slight—especially if the ship doesn't look like an ordinary merchant vessel.

Adventure Background

Read or paraphrase the following to the players after the PCs have spent at least one full day in Narborel:

> For as long as anyone in Narborel can remember, nothing has come easily to the residents of this small community. It's taken years for seagoing commerce to spread along the coast—years during which the people of Narborel scratched out a meager existence on a day-to-day basis. The town has survived, but now mysterious forces threaten its growing prosperity.
>
> Narborel is home to many fishermen, but its main industry is timber

(understandable given the town's proximity to the woodlands). The ship builders take what timber they need, and the surplus is traded north. Settlers from the northern town of Seapoint rely on Narborel's timber to build their houses, but Narborel would never have been considered a viable trade town had not intrepid fishermen begun diving for pearls and coral off the nearby coast. Such commodities put Narborel on the map.

The shipping route with Seapoint is the life of Narborel. Without this trade, the whole community suffers. All commerce between Narborel and Seapoint would otherwise depend on a time-consuming and hazardous overland route—impractical given the rough terrain, the threat of humanoids, and the weight of the timber cargo. Mounting an overland caravan would be a foolish and expensive proposition. Nevertheless, Narborel's reliance on the sea trade has been a constant source of worry—and for good reason.

Just as Narborel seemed to be coming into its own, ships began to disappear while traveling north to Seapoint. Sporadically but far too often, cargoes and crews were lost to the depths. On occasion, merchant ships that were reported lost turned up days later—battered, empty, and washed up on the rocky shore between Seapoint and Narborel. These hulks, gutted of anything portable and valuable, offered the only clue to what was going on. They were empty of cargo, so robbery was a motive. The crews had apparently been kidnapped or thrown overboard, because no evidence of life remained on any of the wrecks.

Obviously, a sinister force is operating in the waters between Narborel and Seapoint. But of what sort? Are the thieves merely pirates engaging in occasional raids? If this were so, the sea would be no more dangerous to travel than the overland route; certainly, land caravans have been ambushed and looted before. Putting up with plunderers is an occupational hazard in the business of commerce, and the threat of an occasional pirate raid is certainly not enough to intimidate most merchants.

But these raids have become more than occasional. Lately, one or two ships per month have been attacked en route from Narborel to Seapoint. Each raid is terrifyingly thorough—at the least, stripping a ship of any items of worth, and at the most, causing the victimized ship to disappear from the surface of the sea.

Most of the victimized ships were loaded with timber, but several of the merchants believe the raiders are really after the consignments of coral and pearls that many ships carried. Though the wealthier merchants may be able to withstand this sort of loss, some of them are having difficulty persuading sailors to sign on with ships heading north. Curiously, no ships have been lost on the trip south, despite their cargoes of ale, cloth, and other useful commodities. Many of the smaller merchant companies, and even some of the larger ones, have become apprehensive about playing the odds any further. Word has reached Narborel that several commercial interests in Seapoint have made a pact to insure their continued survival. If the raids cannot be stopped, the merchants will shut down the shipping route to Narborel and restrict trade to an overland route, acquiring their precious pearls and coral from Narborel but looking to communities farther north for timber.

Two attempts to find and crush the sinister sea raiders have failed. A privately owned warship, disguised to resemble a merchant caravel but loaded with mercenaries, was found stripped and half sunk near the coastline. Another vessel, this one an undisguised naval warship, vanished while scouring the islands southeast of Seapoint.

All of these conditions add up to deep trouble for Narborel. If even a few of the merchants decide to give up the sea trade, the town's economy will stagnate. Only days ago, Narborel's town council promised a reward of 3,000 gp to anyone who can successfully investigate the cause of these raids and put an end to the piracy that threatens the town's continued existence. No one has taken up the offer yet—but your party has recently arrived, and that reward money looks pretty good.

Rumors in Narborel
(Roll 1d12)

Each day the PCs spend in Narborel, they may overhear 1-2 rumors regarding the mysterious scourge that has beset the northern waters.

1. Maggie Leuwynn's been visited several times by a handsome elf with braided blonde hair. I wonder which of them is older? (True; see area L.)

2. A ship called the *Scourge* brought some unmarked ale barrels into Narborel about two months ago. Barnacle Bieram, owner of the local tavern, figured the barrels were from Seapoint. However, Bieram was told by the dockmaster that the ship belonged to a wealthy elf merchant from the south. (True; although the elf merchant is actually Niram Renotal.)

3. Before the shipping lanes between Narborel and Seapoint were well established, they crossed the territory of a terrible sea monster. The locals gave the legendary beast a name—Shellback. (True; dragon turtles once migrated to the northern waters, but very few of Narborel's current residents have seen such a creature.)

4. The waters have become the hunting grounds of a ghost ship and her ghoulish crew. Fishermen have seen the barnacle-covered wreck floating in the misty waters of coves farther north. (False)

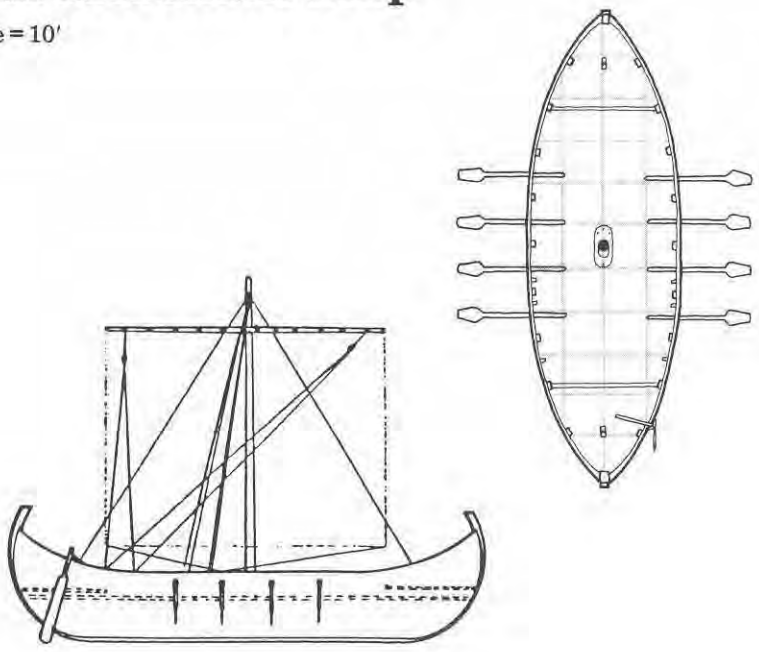
5. 'Bout 15 years ago, we was chasin' a pirate ship out to sea. When our ship were nearly chompin' at her stern, the darned pirate ship hoisted herself outta th' water and floated up into the sky. I never seen nothin' stranger in me life." (False; unless the DM wishes to tease the PCs with the notion of spelljamming vessels.)

6. About three years ago, a merchant ship called *Phulton's Fury* drifted into Narborel's harbor without a crew. The decks were covered with seaweed, the bilge smelled of rotten flesh, but nothing and no one was aboard. (False; but a favorite tale of the local tavern owner.)

7-12. Rumors overheard are unrelated to pirates or shipping.

Small Merchant Ship

1 square = 10′



The presence of a hardy band of adventurers in a town the size of Narborel is not likely to go unnoticed for long. PCs who hang around the local inn or tavern are quickly told the dismal circumstances affecting Narborel (through casual conversation and rumors; see sidebar).

At some time on the second day they are in town, the adventurers are greeted by two important individuals: Reginald Timberman, a trader who lives in Narborel, and his acquaintance Jeklen Canaird, a halfling spy. Reginald is a modest local merchant, worried about the future of his timber trade and lumberyard. Jeklen is more ostentatious, sporting a flashy gold falcon pendant and a well-used short sword strapped to his side. The DM should be sure to mention the halfling's appearance; it may become an important clue later (see area P).

Jeklen has been sent to Narborel by a wealthy Seapoint clothing and jewelry merchant named Evald Ferrier to learn more about the mysterious pirates (and to keep an eye out for anyone who might be selling stolen goods).

Merchant Ferrier has very personal reasons for wanting the pirates stopped: Two of his ships set out from Narborel and were never heard from again. He needs the shipments of pearls and coral to sustain his jewelry business, and so he has put up most of the reward money offered by the town council.

Reginald and Jeklen suspect that the pirates may be using spies to determine the cargoes and shipping dates of vessels leaving Narborel. If this is true, they want the spy network unveiled and destroyed. Jeklen can provide one more fact: An ale merchant from Seapoint arrived in Narborel two weeks ago to restock the local inn. He claimed that a ship resembling one of Ferrier's lost vessels (the *Sea Hawk*) passed his ship and headed north, presumably toward Seapoint. However, the passing ship rode high in the water, empty of cargo, which is unusual for a vessel leaving Narborel's harbor. A quick study of the dockmaster's log confirmed that a ship matching the ale merchant's description tied up at Narborel two weeks ago, remained half a day, and left without taking on any cargo other than normal supplies.

Reginald wants the pirates stopped at any cost. Jeklen wants his employer's stolen ship and merchandise recovered. If the PCs seem reluctant to sign on, Jeklen will sweeten the pot by promising a 2,000-gp bonus if the PCs recover the *Sea Hawk* and its missing cargo intact (especially if the PCs consider the town's offer of 3,000 gp too paltry).

Jeklen Canaird, halfling thief: AL N; AC 8; MV 6; T4; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type, backstab ×2; S 12, D 16, C 10, I 13, W 10, Ch 12; PP 55%, OL 47%, FT 40%, MS 53%, HS 45%, DN 20%, CW 83%, RL 15%; ML 9; *short sword +1,* gold falcon pendant (worth 100 gp).

Reginald Timberman, timber trader: AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 10; hand axe, dagger.

For the Dungeon Master

Just as most of the merchants and residents of Narborel have suspected, a band of pirates is behind the evil operations in the local waters. The problem, however, isn't that simple. Operating in league with the pirates, and acting as their leader in most ways, is an elf wizard named Niram Renotal. Niram uses a *rod of beguiling* as a safeguard against mutiny by the pirates, and on occasion he has used it to end an argument or quell a possible uprising. The pirates realize that Niram can put a stop to any conflict by using the rod, but they do not know that the rod has a limited number of charges remaining. Even Niram doesn't know how many charges are left.

Niram is not really interested in Narborel's timber, pearl, and coral trade, although he'll take any plunder he can get. The wizard is using the pirates to acquire enough stolen merchandise to purchase a minor spelljamming helm. (See the SPELLJAMMER® boxed set.) Using his *teleport* spells, Niram has been meeting with a dubious spacefaring merchant who can acquire spelljamming helms on the black market. The merchant, a mind flayer, has agreed to sell Niram a helm for 25,000 gp if the wizard includes the pirates' headquarters and the stolen cargo shipments as part of the deal. (The illithid wants the base for future planetary exploits and the timber to build more squid ships and repair damage caused by raids.) The pirates are ignorant of Niram's arrangement and unaware that

he vanishes from the headquarters periodically. They are curious why the elf is stockpiling valuable merchandise rather than selling it off, but they do not question Niram because of his *rod of beguiling*. Once he has the helm, Niram intends to install it aboard a captured pirate vessel and seek his fortune in the vastness of Wildspace. Whether the pirates join him is of little concern to Niram. In time, his illithid contact will show up to confiscate the pirates' secret base and its hoard as part of Niram's payment (and woe to any pirates who are left behind).

Although the elf wizard relies on the pirates' plundering expertise, the creature primarily responsible for the raiders' recent success is neither pirate nor wizard, but a dragon turtle. The dragon turtle cooperates voluntarily with Niram and the pirate band, and its cooperation is enhanced by Niram's *charm monster* spell.

The pirates travel in a small, unassuming ship (see page 36 for a diagram of this craft). The ship is unlikely to arouse the suspicion of any merchantship captain who sights it; eight men in a small boat hardly constitute a threat. But lurking nearby, underwater, is the dragon turtle—and that changes the odds.

The dragon turtle secretly accompanies the small ship when it leaves the pirates' headquarters and moves into the shipping lane, hoping to encounter a northbound ship loaded with timber and other valuable commodities. When the small vessel moves close enough to a merchant ship to determine that it's worth taking, the pirate leader orders his oarsmen to give a signal to the dragon turtle (they slap their oars on the water's surface), and the monster roars into action. Still underwater, the dragon turtle rushes the merchant ship. It surfaces beside the vessel and belches out a cloud of scalding steam that kills everyone not below decks. After this blast, it is a simple matter for the pirates to board the merchant ship, making short work of any resistance that remains.

As a reward for its assistance, the dragon turtle gets to devour all the crew members it can eat. The monster also receives a small portion of the monetary treasure taken from each wrecked merchant ship. The relationship between the pirates and the dragon turtle is mutually beneficial: the creature gets free meals and a goodly amount of treasure (and a way to transport the treasure to its lair), and the pirates get all the merchandise they can carry off the ships.

The pirates do not want to completely discourage merchant ship traffic in the area, but Niram's greed and impatience have forced the pirates to attack more ships than is wise. With Niram's prodding, the pirates set out on raids once every two weeks or so. They strip each prize of its cargo (or as much of it as they can pile onto their smaller ship), then scuttle the captured ship and head back to their secret base. The wrecked hulls that wash up on the rocks between Seapoint and Narborel are ships that the pirates thought had been sunk—but they retained enough buoyancy to ride the current until wrecking on the beach.

The pirates "own" one large merchant ship, the *Sea Hawk* (which was stolen from the Seapoint merchant Evald Ferrier and renamed the *Scourge*). Niram secretly plans to convert this ship into a spelljamming craft but openly uses it to travel to Narborel, where he and the pirates sell their incidental plunderings (crewmen's belongings, foodstuffs, and so on) for a small profit after repackaging the goods in unmarked crates at the pirate hideout. Niram also acquires spell components in the town while the pirates meet with their spy. (See area C.) The pirates have replaced the rigging of the *Sea Hawk* with rigging from other plundered ships to further the deception. Niram arrogantly believes this deception is foolproof; the ship is cleverly disguised (at least he thinks so), and its owner is presumably nowhere near Narborel.

Included with this adventure are two types of sailing ships that play a major part in this adventure. The small merchant ship shown on the opposite page is the vessel that the pirate band uses on its raids. The large merchant ship shown on page 40 is Evald Ferrier's missing vessel, the *Sea Hawk*, now renamed the *Scourge*. The DM is encouraged to refer to the *Pirates of the Fallen Stars* (*PFS*) accessory when roleplaying situations aboard any seafaring vessel. For game purposes, assume all crews are trained (unless the PCs are themselves the crew). If ship statistics are required, the large merchant ship has roughly the same statistics as a standard caravel; the smaller merchant ship has statistics similar to the knarr. (See *PFS*, pages 82 and 85, for details.) Neither ship is equipped with weapons.

Town of Narborel

The bustling riverside community of Narborel has become a key link in the chain of commerce in this part of the world. Aside from being the home port of merchant ships that ply the trade route north to Seapoint, the town is also a stopover for caravans traveling overland. However, caravans are rare, given the rough terrain and overland hazards. Ships carrying cloth, spices, leather, ale, pottery and other goods from coastal towns farther south arrive in port on the average of one or two per day. Ships laden with timber, coral and pearls leave Narborel's pier regularly—but right now most of the ships are headed south rather than north. Northbound ships face great peril from pirate raids.

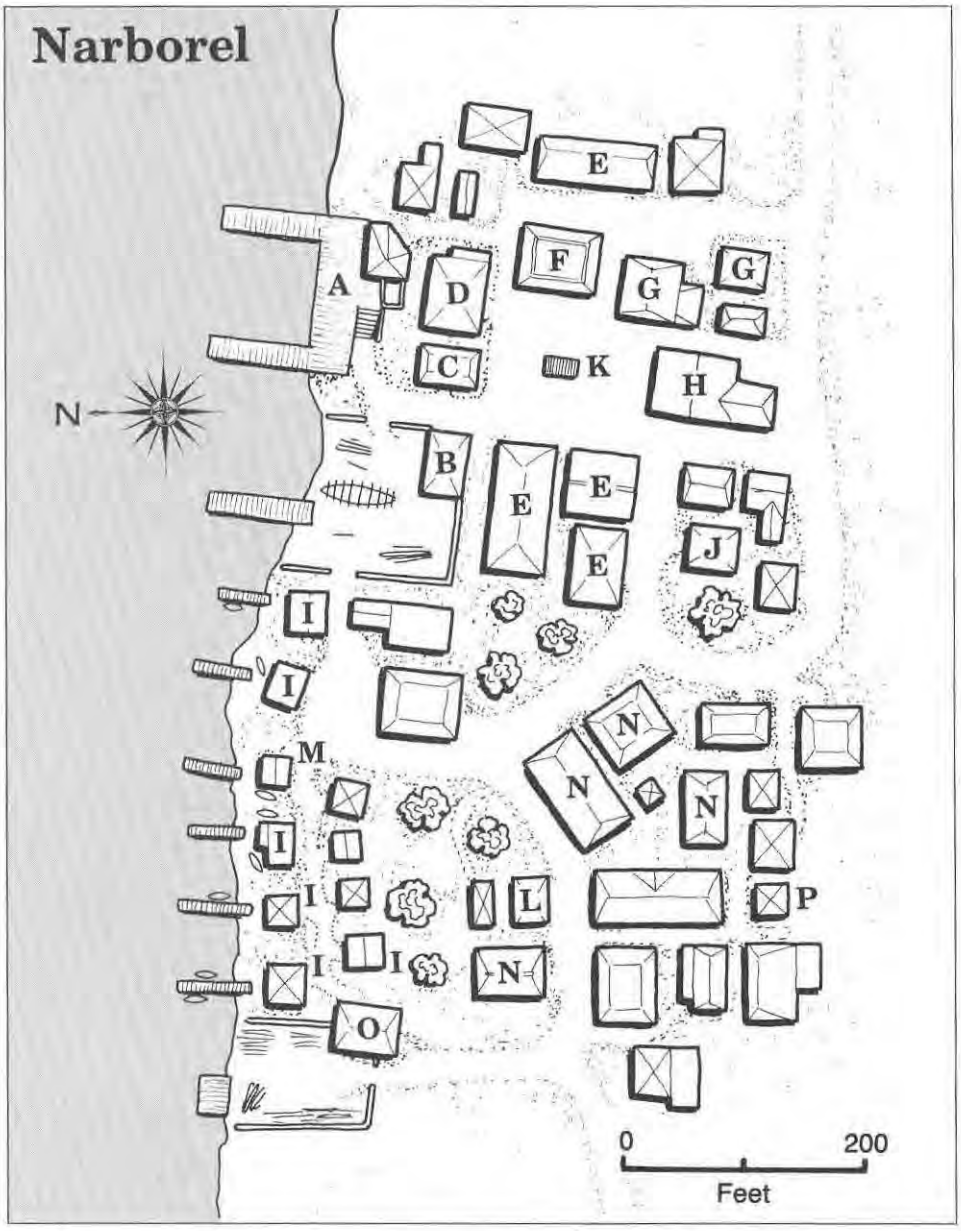
Unless otherwise noted, all residents of Narborel are unarmed zero-level humans. The DM must generate the details of such NPCs and their homes if necessary.

Typical resident: AL N; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 1d6+1; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 10; typically unarmed.

A. Receiving Docks. Four large merchant ships can tie up at Narborel, but the barnacle-covered docks seldom hold more than two vessels at once. The dockmaster's shack stands at the back of the pier.

Narborel's dockmaster is a barrel-chested, black-bearded man named Dulson Grumb. He keeps a less than meticulous record of ships that arrive and depart. Dulson does not divulge such information freely; PCs wishing to study his log must pay him a gold piece. The log, however, yields some useful information. A ship named the *Scourge* has docked at Narborel three times in the last four months, unloading small cargoes of ale, cloth, spices, and other commodities. The vessel, owned by an unnamed elf and captained by a man named Morgan Krell (whom Dulson describes as "friendly enough"), seldom stays for more than a day and takes on only provisions and water before leaving again.

Dulson Grumb, dockmaster: AL N; AC 9; MV 12; F1; hp 9; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +1; S 17, D 15;



ML 12; club. Proficiencies: rope use, seamanship, shipwright (see *PFS*, page 24).

B. Shipbuilding Yard. This fenced area is serviced by its own pier. A partially constructed hull (far from being completed) is the dominant feature of the yard. Around it are stacks of wooden planks and beams, metal fittings, and other necessary materials. The residence for the yard superintendent, **Shamus Cozwell** (hp 5), and his four **apprentices** (hp 4 each) is a simple enclosure in the northeast corner of the yard.

C. The Skittering Crab. Hanging above the entrance to this tavern is a sign depicting a crab. The PCs are free to drop in for some mead or the latest rumors regarding incoming and outgoing vessels. The tavern is owned and operated by Barnacle Bieram, who is known for his wildly exaggerated yet terrifying ghost tales as much as for his ale.

Barnacle Bieram, retired fighter: AL N; AC 10; MV 12; F2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 13, D 11, C 10, I 11, W 10, Ch 11; ML 12; gaff. Proficiencies: rope use, seamanship, weather sense.

PCs searching for hirelings or able crewmen can usually find 2-12 unemployed sailors drinking at the bar. They work for about 2 sp per day, plus incentives, but are reluctant to travel north. Sailors in their cups may agree to sign on for a trip north, but they will demand exorbitant rates (6 gp or more/day each).

Sailors (2-12): AL N; AC 10; MV 12; F1; hp 1d10 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; dagger (50%), cutlass (50%). See the *Complete Fighter's Handbook* (*CFH*), page 100, for details of the cutlass.

The DM should role-play these sailors as needed. All possess rope use and seamanship proficiency plus one other nonweapon proficiency selected by the DM.

One of Bieram's regular patrons, a fisherman named Garth Brunnel, is actually a spy for the pirates. Garth has scraped by on a fisherman's income for years, watching the profits of the timber trade rise, and the sudden growth of Narborel's pearl and coral diving industries. Garth is no longer content to live in poverty and is paid in gold for his services. He keeps himself well informed of all vessels due to arrive and depart in the weeks ahead. When not spying at the tavern, Garth lives in a small riverside shack (area M). He spends very little time fishing, even though the pirates have warned him to maintain his cover.

Garth Brunnel knows that a halfling named Jeklen Canaird (see "Adventure Background") has been making inquiries about the pirate raids. Using the pirates' money, Garth has hired a thief named Shadow (see area P) to quietly dispose of the halfling.

Garth Brunnel, fisherman and spy: AL NE; AC 8; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; D 16; ML 9; XP 15; gaff, knife, pouch with 7 gp and 13 sp. Proficiencies: boating, fishing, rope use.

D. Cooper's Shop. This building, owned by a barrel maker, is located next to the Skittering Crab tavern (area C). The cooper, **Ralgus Kincaid** (hp 4), keeps busy manufacturing new cargo containers. Ralgus has two sons named **Peter** and **Talbot** (hp 3 each) who assist him. His daughter, **Maerie** (hp 2), runs the store.

E. Merchant Establishments. These buildings are the property of the local Merchants' Guild. Some of them serve as cheap shelter for transients, including workmen who come to town in overland caravans and ships' crews. The others are warehouses for goods destined for reshipment.

F. The Flying Manta Inn. The Flying Manta is the best meeting place in town. Visitors can rent rooms by the night, and meals are sold in a large common room where sailors and traders mix. Rooms cost 2 sp per night; meals range from 5 sp to 2 gp. The inn is always crowded with ship captains and officers, prominent merchants passing through town, and other influential and knowledgeable types.

The proprietor of Narborel's only inn is a boastful, rough-and-tumble woman named Karyn Sykes. Before settling in Narborel, Karyn was captain of the cargo ship *Sea Urchin* for many years. Now she's a member of Narborel's town council, which meets semiregularly in the back room of her inn. If the PCs can get beyond her abrasive, loud-mouthed exterior, they will discover that Karyn is a wise, honest, and caring woman.

Karyn Sykes, innkeeper: AL NG; AC 9; MV 12; F4; hp 23; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 15, D 15, C 12, I 10, W 14, Ch 11; ML 13; club. Karyn has cutlass and crossbow proficiencies and punching specialization (see the *CFH,* page 75), as well as navigation, rope use, and seamanship proficiencies.

G. Ships' Store. These two buildings are owned by **Donovan Graff** (hp 5), a retired merchant and former sailor. Any nautical equipment can be found in his store (the larger building). Goods for sale range from sextants to barrels of grog to caulking pitch. Donovan's house is the smaller of the two buildings. He operates in cooperation with the rope and sail maker's shop (area H) and thus does not sell rope or rigging materials or sails.

H. Riggers' Store. The local rope and sail maker, **Finn Sargesper** (hp 4), sticks to his specialties without trying to compete for the customers of the neighboring ship's store (area G). PCs who want to purchase rope or rigging materials must deal with Finn, who is an approachable but not overly likeable man.

I. Fishermen's Houses. Narborel's fishermen live in several buildings scattered along the riverside. They are generally a talkative, friendly bunch with small families to tend. They spend their days on the sea and their evenings drinking at the tavern (area C). All fishermen have boating, fishing, and rope use proficiencies.

J. Constable's Office. This building contains a jail with a pair of iron-barred cells, usually empty. The town constable, Jarick Redstern, is a figurehead with relatively little power. Narborel's citizens enforce the law by a crude sort of honor system based on blood feuds. If anyone steals property or slips a knife between someone's ribs, the victim (or his hired help, or the survivors of his family) will retaliate.

Jarick Redstern, constable: AL LN; AC 8; MV 12; F3; hp 15; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 14, D 9, C 15, I 11, W 10, Ch 10; ML 12; leather armor, club, short sword. Proficiencies: direction sense, fire building, riding (land-based).

K. Town Square. Most of the main buildings in the business district are built around the perimeter of this traders' square, an open-air marketplace with a raised wooden platform (used as an auction block, speaker's stand, etc.) in the center. One day a week, the square is filled with merchants and traders peddling their wares. On market day, virtually any item imaginable (within reason, of course) can be bought from one of the vendors. Often, the captain of a ship will try to time his arrival in Narborel, or delay his ship's departure, to be on hand for market day. As luck would have it, the next market day is scheduled for the day after the PCs arrive in port—a fine opportunity for everyone to replenish supplies.

L. Maggie's Pawn Shoppe. This small, whitewashed store belongs to an elderly woman and former adventurer named Maggie Leuwynn. A woman of some charm and magical talent, she sells unusual trinkets in the front of the store and spell components in the back. The evil elf wizard Niram Renotal discovered months ago that Maggie possesses an impressive collection of material components, and he drops by occasionally to fill his pouches. Niram slothfully uses his *rod of beguiling* to get the components for free, and poor Maggie has no idea how terribly she's been taken advantage of. PCs seeking spell components here have an 80% chance of finding what they're looking for.

Maggie has only words of praise for the mysterious elf who visits her from time to time. (She has yet to learn his name.) The rod's effect wears off soon after the elf's departure, but Maggie has no knowledge of ever having been beguiled. She regards the elf as a trustworthy friend who will eventually repay her for the items he "borrows."

Maggie Leuwynn, human wizard: AL LG; AC 9; MV 9 (due to age); W6; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 8, D 10, C 9, I 16, W 13, Ch 12; ML 10; *wand of polymorphing* (15 charges), *ring of protection +1.* Spells: *cantrip, detect magic, mending, read magic; bind, continual light; clairaudience, tongues.*

M. Brunnel's House. This cramped house, little more than a shack, clings to the riverbank. Resting on stones beside the house are Garth Brunnel's overturned fishing boat, nets, and lobster traps. None of his fishing gear has been used for days. PCs searching the interior of the shack have a 10% cumulative chance per turn of finding a locked wooden coffer containing a pouch with 53 gp. The money was given to Garth by the pirates. The key to the coffer is hidden in a soup tureen.

N. Coral and Oyster Warehouses. These buildings serve as warehouses for coral and oysters recovered from diving expeditions off the coast. Narborel's coral and pearl trade falls under the supervision of the local Merchants' Guild, which conducts business in privacy inside the warehouses. To deter thieves, each building is typically guarded by 5-10 1st-level fighters (same statistics as sailors in area C).

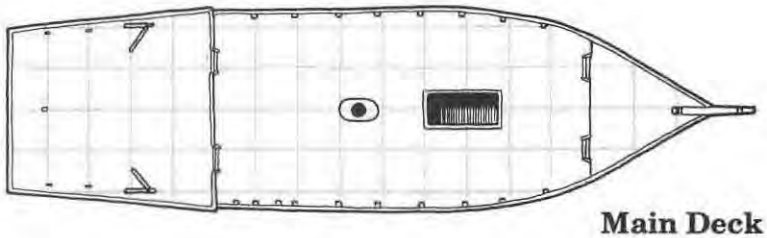
O. Timber Yard. Narborel's timber yard is enclosed by a 9'-high wooden fence. Foresters cut trees from the woods to the south and float them down river to the yard. Carpenters and laborers pull the trees ashore, where the trees are dried and split or sawed into planks. Any timber not used by Narborel residents is shipped to Seapoint.

Trained war dogs guard the timber yard against intruders, but there are no

Large Merchant Ship

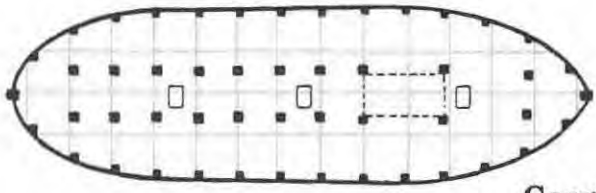
Sea Hawk / Scourge

1 square = 10′

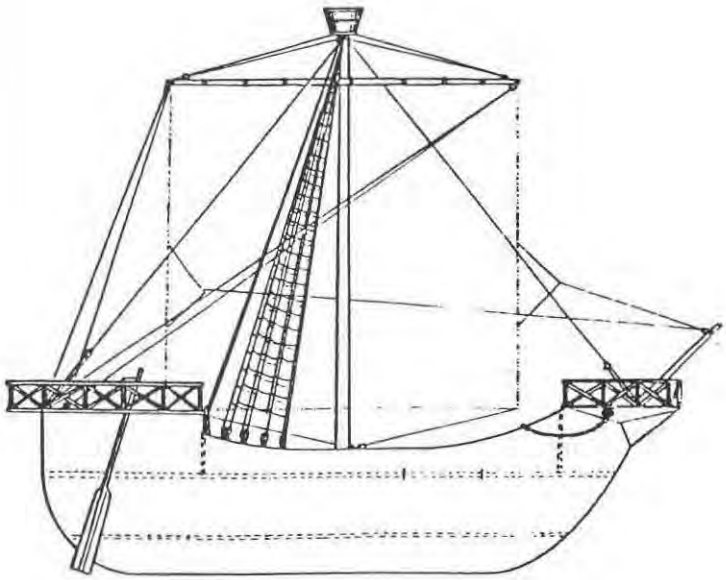


Main Deck

Cabin Interiors



Cargo Hold



other guards. A building nearby stores the saws, adzes, planes, wedges, and hammers used to cut the wood to the local shipbuilder's specifications.

P. Empty Store. This vacant shop is where the thief Shadow hides during the day. At night he prowls around the town's foggy alleys, cutting the purse strings of drunken merchants and sailors.

Shadow, human thief: AL CE; AC 5; MV 12; T5; hp 22; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (backstab ×3); S 11, D 17, C 12, I 12, W 10, Ch 8; PP 55%, OL 52%, FT 40%, MS 45%, HS 36% (41% with mantle), DN 20%, CW 90%, RL 25%; ML 9; XP 270; leather armor, *mantle of the mundane, dagger of impaling +2* (see the *Complete Thief's Handbook* for descriptions of both items), pouch containing 100 gp, deck of 12 black cards. Proficiencies: reading lips, tumbling, ventriloquism.

Recently, Garth Brunnel (see area C) paid Shadow 100 gp to kill Jeklen Canaird, the halfling working for Evald Ferrier. Shadow intends to carry out the murder once Jeklen is alone and vulnerable. He has been cautiously stalking the halfling for two days, using his *mantle of the mundane* to remain unnoticed. The assassination should occur a night or two before the *Scourge* arrives in Narborel.

Shadow leaves a black card (his personal affectation) at the murder scene. If the PCs are having a hard time finding the killer, an NPC resident may come forth with information about an "evil shadow" skulking through the alleys at night, or a man of shady description toying with a peculiar deck of black cards at the local pub. The card itself should yield little information other than making it clear that the assassination was a professional job.

Spells such as *past life* (see *Tome of Magic)* or *speak with dead* can be cast on Jeklen's body to identify the killer. However, the chance of accurately identifying the killer is only 15% for each spell. (Shadow is very skilled, so few of his victims see him.)

Shadow's weakness is his greed. After he slays Jeklen, Shadow steals the halfling's gold pendant and magical short sword. A clever PC may use a *locate object* spell to help pinpoint the killer's lair (where the stolen items are stashed), if the PC remembers seeing the halfling's pendant and sword at

their first meeting. If Shadow is caught, he shows little loyalty and can be persuaded to divulge the name of his employer.

The *Scourge* Arrives

When the adventurers first arrive in Narborel, they won't be fortunate enough to find the *Sea Hawk* sitting at the dock waiting for them. However, by questioning Jeklen Canaird or the townspeople, they can learn that a ship matching the description of the *Sea Hawk* left port almost two weeks ago.

Several merchant ships visit Narborel on a monthly schedule, and those who keep track of such things (the dockmaster, for instance) can tell the PCs when they might expect to see a particular ship return. If the party uncovers Garth Brunnel's allegiance to the pirates, they can coax the necessary information from him with a substantial bribe or a little intimidation. Garth knows only a few of the pirates by name but does not know Niram. He knows that the pirates plan to raid merchant ships but does not know the location of their hideout. Three days after the PCs' arrival in town, the ship they're seeking pulls into the pier, whether or not the party has questioned Garth.

The *Scourge*, as Evald Ferrier's ship is now called, is currently captained by the third-ranking member of the pirate gang, a scruffy 4th-level fighter named Korod Fisheyes. Korod takes orders from the elf wizard Niram Renotal, who has come along to collect more spell components from Maggie Leuwynn. The remaining crew includes two other pirates and eight deck hands. Morgan Krell, the pirate leader, remains at the pirate headquarters. (See "Terakan Isle.")

The pirates unload their unmarked crates of spices, kegs of wine, and bolts of cloth to sell in the open market (area K). They certainly don't take kindly to anyone who tries to invade the ship and its cabins. Korod, who dislikes making public appearances, remains aboard the vessel at all times. If Korod is lured away, he posts one other pirate (Aldo or Kane) to stand guard. It's virtually impossible for even one person—let alone an entire party of adventurers—to stow away aboard the *Scourge* and avoid discovery. Clearly, the easiest way for the PCs to deal with the pirates is to take the ship by force but without damaging the vessel itself.

The ship stays overnight—long enough for Aldo or Kane to get the latest shipping schedule from Garth Brunnel, and for Niram to visit Maggie Leuwynn's pawn shop. Fearing that his rod may be running low on charges, the wizard has come for more than just spell components this time; he intends to "borrow" Maggie's *wand of polymorphing* as well.

Niram Renotal's statistics can be found at area 5 of "Terakan Isle." At the first sign of trouble, Niram *teleports* to pirate headquarters, leaving Korod and the others to their own devices.

Korod Fisheyes, human pirate: AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; F4; hp 34; THAC0 17 (16 with specialized weapon); #AT 1 (3/2 with specialization); Dmg by weapon type +1 (Strength), +2 (specialization); S 16, D 17, C 15, I 12, W 9, Ch 9; ML 11; XP 270; leather armor, long sword (specialized), *dagger +1*. In addition to his long sword specialization, Korod is also specialized in two-weapon fighting style (see the *CFH*, page 64).

Aldo Huckster, human pirate: AL LE; AC 9; MV 12; F2; hp 21; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 15, D 15, C 17, I 9, W 11, Ch 9; ML 9; XP 65; long sword, dagger, 14 gp. Aldo has the two-weapon style specialization.

Kane Pechnee, human pirate: AL LE; AC 8; MV 12; F2; hp 17; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 13, D 16, C 13, I 11, W 9, Ch 8; ML 9; XP 35; cutlass, dagger, 23 sp, silver serpent-shaped earring (15 gp).

Human deck hands (8): AL LE; AC 10 or 9 (with shield); MV 12; F1; hp 10, 8, 7 (×3), 6 (×2), 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 9; XP 15; leather jerkin, dagger, shield (stored below decks), short sword (stored below decks). They all have seamanship and rope use proficiencies.

Below Decks

The *Sea Hawk* is a large merchant ship, depicted on the facing page. PCs searching the standard crew cabins will find nothing of value (other than the crewmen's shields and short swords, if they are not in use). The larger aft cabin is the captain's quarters, currently occupied by Niram and Korod. This cabin contains a pair of hammocks, an empty desk, two wooden trunks (unlocked and empty), and a small table with a drawer. Rolled up and stored inside the drawer is a map of the island chain (see page 42) with the site of the pirate headquarters clearly marked with an "X."

The forward section of the ship has a small cabin used as storage for the anchor chains, extra ropes and lines, and maintenance supplies. The food supplies are stored in the cargo hold, accessible through an open hatch in the front of the main deck.

Defeating Korod and his men and obtaining the map should be a simple matter for a party of 4th-7th level PCs (particularly since Niram flees at the slightest inkling of danger). This initial encounter with the pirates is decidedly in the party's favor, and the DM should not deter the PCs from becoming overconfident.

Journey by Sea

To reach the pirate stronghold, the PCs may need to commandeer the *Sea Hawk*, but they must commission a trained crew. A minimum of 10 crewmen is required to sail and steer the large merchant ship, and 15-20 crewmen constitute an ideal complement. If the PCs don't have the needed proficiencies, they must hire a navigator and crew. With a little friendly persuasion, Karyn Sykes (area F) could be persuaded to accompany them as captain, provided she finds someone to run her inn.

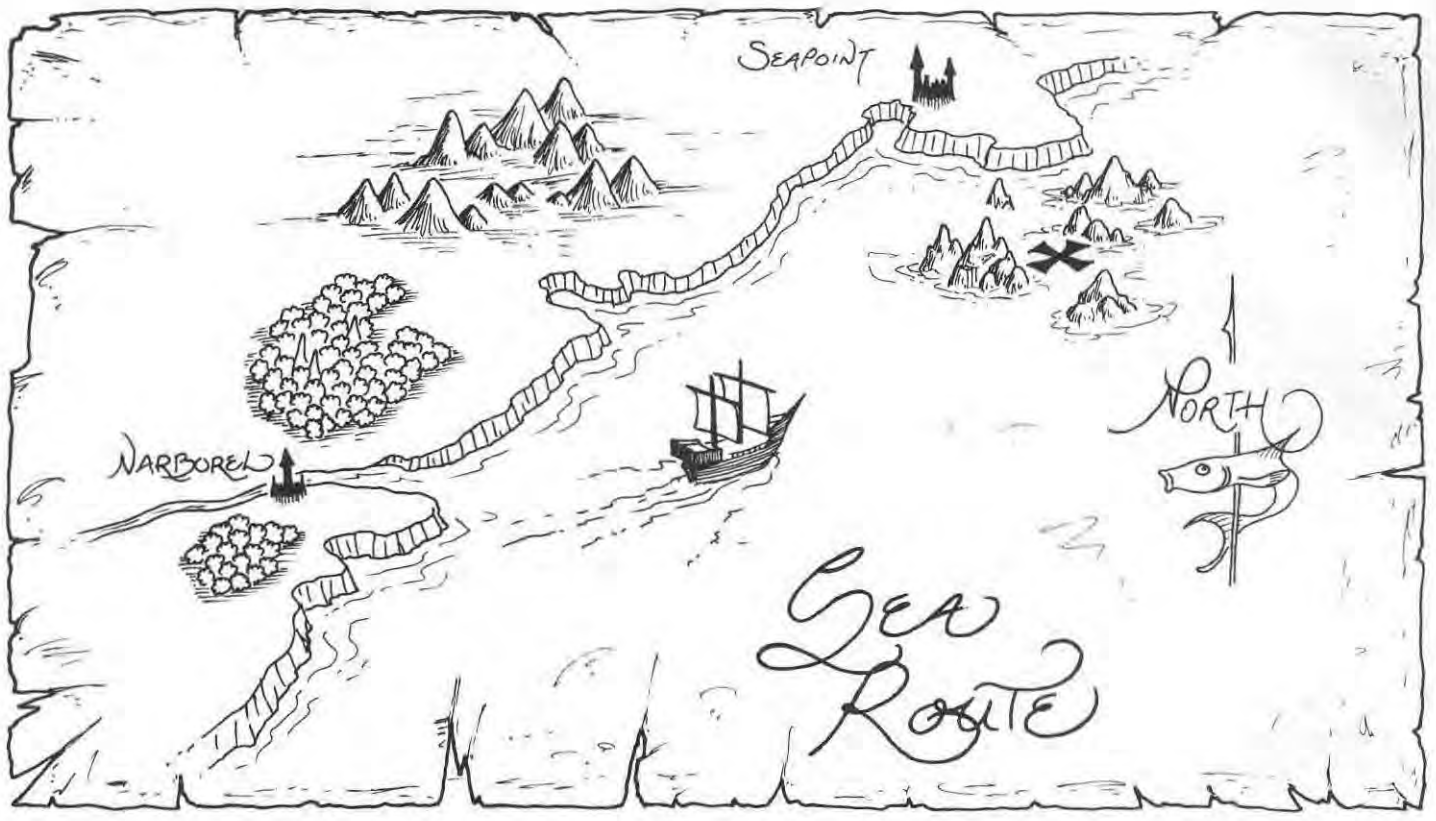
After Canaird is killed in Narborel, the PCs can take the *Sea Hawk* without the permission of its owner (unless their alignments forbid it). Evald Ferrier will extract from the party's reward any money needed to cover damages. (The cost will be high if the ship is lost.)

If the PCs are concerned about damage to the *Sea Hawk*, they could commission another ship to make the perilous journey northward, but this is a difficult task at best. Few captains are mad enough to sail their vessels into potentially dangerous territory. Luckily for the PCs, even fewer captains can resist the promise of a reward in gold coins!

Terakan Isle

The pirates' base of operations is hidden away on the western shore of a small, rocky island in the chain that extends southward from the Seapoint peninsula. The island is named Terakan.

If the PCs approach the island in any vessel other than the *Scourge*, they are attacked by three *charmed* harpies.



Niram, who as an elf is immune to the harpies' singing, *charmed* these ferocious monsters to guard the island from attackers.

If Niram was forced to flee Narborel using his *teleport* spell, he warns the harpies to expect intruders and orders them to attack any ship they see. If Niram fails to alert the harpies, and the PCs approach Terakan Isle in the *Scourge*, the harpies assume that the PCs are pirates returning from Narborel and will not leave their island roost to attack the ship's crew. Without Niram's warning, the harpies are too stupid to realize that someone other than pirates might be aboard the vessel.

The harpies use their singing to attract potential victims topside, making them vulnerable to their claw/claw/club attacks. The harpies can continue to sing while rending apart their helpless foes. Elves, including Niram, are immune to the harmful effects of the harpies' song, and half-elves have a 30% resistance to the *charm*.

Harpies (3): INT low; AL CE; AC 7; MV 6, fly 15 (C); HD 7; hp 47, 39, 34; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6 or 1-3/1-3/weapon; SA singing and *charm*; SZ M; ML 14 (17 while *charmed*); XP 975; MM/184. Each harpy wields a bone club that inflicts 1-8 hp damage.

The harpies' nests are fairly accessible but difficult to spot from sea level. The nests contain fish bones and the remains of several small crabs (caught by the harpies in shallow waters). The harpies have neither eggs nor treasure.

As the PCs approach Terakan Isle, they see two large cave openings (leading to areas 1 and 7) and a small, mostly submerged cave opening between them. The northernmost cave is large enough for only the smaller merchant ship to enter, but the PCs must make a successful Intelligence check to realize this. None of the caves are large enough for the *Scourge* or any large merchant ship to navigate safely, and the southernmost cave (area 7; the dragon turtle's lair) is too low for any sailing vessels to enter. PCs arriving aboard Evald Ferrier's ship must drop anchor outside and enter by other means. Fortunately, the large merchant ship is outfitted with an eight-man rowboat.

Island Encounters

When the PCs arrive at the island, the caverns are occupied by six pirates of 2nd level or higher (detailed in areas 2 and 4), six 1st-level pirates (see areas 1 and 2), and the elf wizard who is the brains behind the operation (see area 5). Niram also keeps a few *charmed* monsters close by for added support (areas 3 and 6). Last, but not least, the dragon turtle always lurks in its nearby lair (area 7).

If Niram was forced to flee Narborel, he assumes the PCs are coming and takes precautions. He does not send the dragon turtle out to intercept the *Sea Hawk* for fear the monster will damage the vessel. (Once Niram attaches the spelljamming helm to the ship, it's his ticket to Wildspace.) Niram warns the harpies and pirates of possible intruders, then goes to his quarters to rememorize any previously used spells.

All of the chambers in the pirates' headquarters are natural caverns hollowed out of the island rock. Except where otherwise noted, the chambers are well illuminated by *continual light* spells. All areas have ceilings at least 20′ high. Most of the doors shown on the map are made of wood and locked. Only Niram Renotal and the pirate leader, Morgan Krell, carry the keys.

1. Docking Cavern. Read or paraphrase the following to the players when the PCs enter from the west or the south:

> You behold a magnificent, magically illuminated cavern flooded with sea water. To the west, the cavern leads out to the open sea. At the eastern end, a wide ledge serves as a warehouse for piles of timber, crates, boxes, and other stolen merchandise. The ceiling ranges from 50′ high (in the middle of the cave) to 30′ high (at the cave mouth). A large wooden hoist juts out form the pier. Tethered to the dock is a 55′ long vessel, its sail lowered. The ship looks just small enough to navigate through the cavern entrance. The dripping water echoes throughout the mammoth chamber.

The pirates load and unload cargo stolen from plundered merchant ships in this monstrous cavern. Guarding the eastern warehouse section is a lone sentry (1st-level pirate). The PCs notice the sentry right away only if the players state that their PCs are looking for guards before entering the cavern. The sentry will certainly be alerted if the PCs attempt a direct assault on the complex through the wide waterway leading west. If so, the guard sounds the alarm; two rounds later, angry pirates from area 2 will fill the dock area, and Niram's margoyle henchmen from area 3 swoop in for the attack.

Unless the party has obviously superior power, the pirates make a determined stand in this cavern. The timber, crates, barrels, and boxes of stolen merchandise are stacked around the open warehouse area, offering substantial cover and lots of hiding places for the defenders (50% cover, for a −4 AC adjustment). If the pirates are getting the worst of the fight, or if it looks like they won't be able to repel the party's assault, they retreat to area 2 and entrench themselves. As a last resort, they escape through the tunnel leading from area 2 to the outside.

If the PCs can sneak into this cavern undetected and quietly dispatch the sentry, they can enter area 2 unhindered.

The ship carries no valuables, since it is used solely on raids against larger merchant vessels. The ship requires a minimum of six crewmen to man the sail; the oars are used only for cavern and close-to-shore navigation. The crates, boxes, and barrels contain everything from food to rigging to standard equipment (no weapons or treasure, however). In terms of overall worth, the stuff stored here is not particularly valuable. The pearls and coral taken from the plundered merchant ships are stored in area 6.

Human pirate: AL LE; AC 10; MV 12; F1; hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 9; XP 15; leather jerkin, short sword, dagger, 15 sp and 5 gp in pouch.

2. Pirate Barracks. The PCs will likely enter this chamber via the north passage leading from area 1. If the alarm has not been sounded, any remaining pirates (with the exception of the pirate leader, Morgan Krell) will be encountered here.

> This 20′ high, irregularly shaped cavern contains several hammocks hung from wooden posts and an assortment of small wooden chests. Stacked along the northern wall are numerous crates and barrels. A small water fowl is roasting on a spit over the fire pit. The decor is completed by a 4′×4′ table for preparing food and a long dining table covered with dishes, mugs, and leftovers. Scattered about the room are several weapons—daggers and short swords—which can be snatched up at a moment's notice.

Unless they have been summoned to area 1 by the sentry's alarm, 10 pirates are present here. Most of them are sleeping in their hammocks, but at least one pirate is awake (eating dinner, counting his personal treasure, sharpening his weapon, or tending the roasting bird at the fire pit). Five of the pirates are 2nd level or higher, while the rest are 1st-level pirates with similar statistics.

Jans Harper, human pirate: AL LE; AC 9; MV 12; F3; hp 25; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 13, D 15, C 15, I 12, W 11, Ch 10; ML 12; XP 65; long sword, throwing dagger, 15 gp, 24 sp. Jans has punching, spear, and cutlass proficiencies.

Larkin Fletcher, human pirate: AL LE; AC 7; MV 9; F3; hp 23; THAC0 18 (17 with specialization); #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type +1 (Strength), +2 (specialization); S 16, D 11, C 13, I 9, W 9, Ch 13; ML 12; XP 65; studded leather armor, long sword (specialized), five throwing daggers, gold earring (35 gp). Larkin is also proficient with the cutlass.

Kalus Goffe, half-orc pirate: AL LE; AC 8; MV 12; F2; hp 19; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +1 (Strength); SD infravision; S 17, D 11, C 16, I 10, W 7, Ch 6; ML 12; XP 35; leather armor, long sword, dagger, 24 sp, silver crescent-shaped earring (10 gp).

Gorlon Dundore, dwarf pirate: AL LE; AC 10; MV 12; F2; hp 16; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD infravision, +4 to saving throws vs. spells and poison; S 14, D 12, C 15, I 6, W 9, Ch 7; ML 9; XP 35; leather jerkin, cutlass, two throwing daggers, 18 gp. Gorlon was raised by humans and shaves his beard to resemble them more closely.

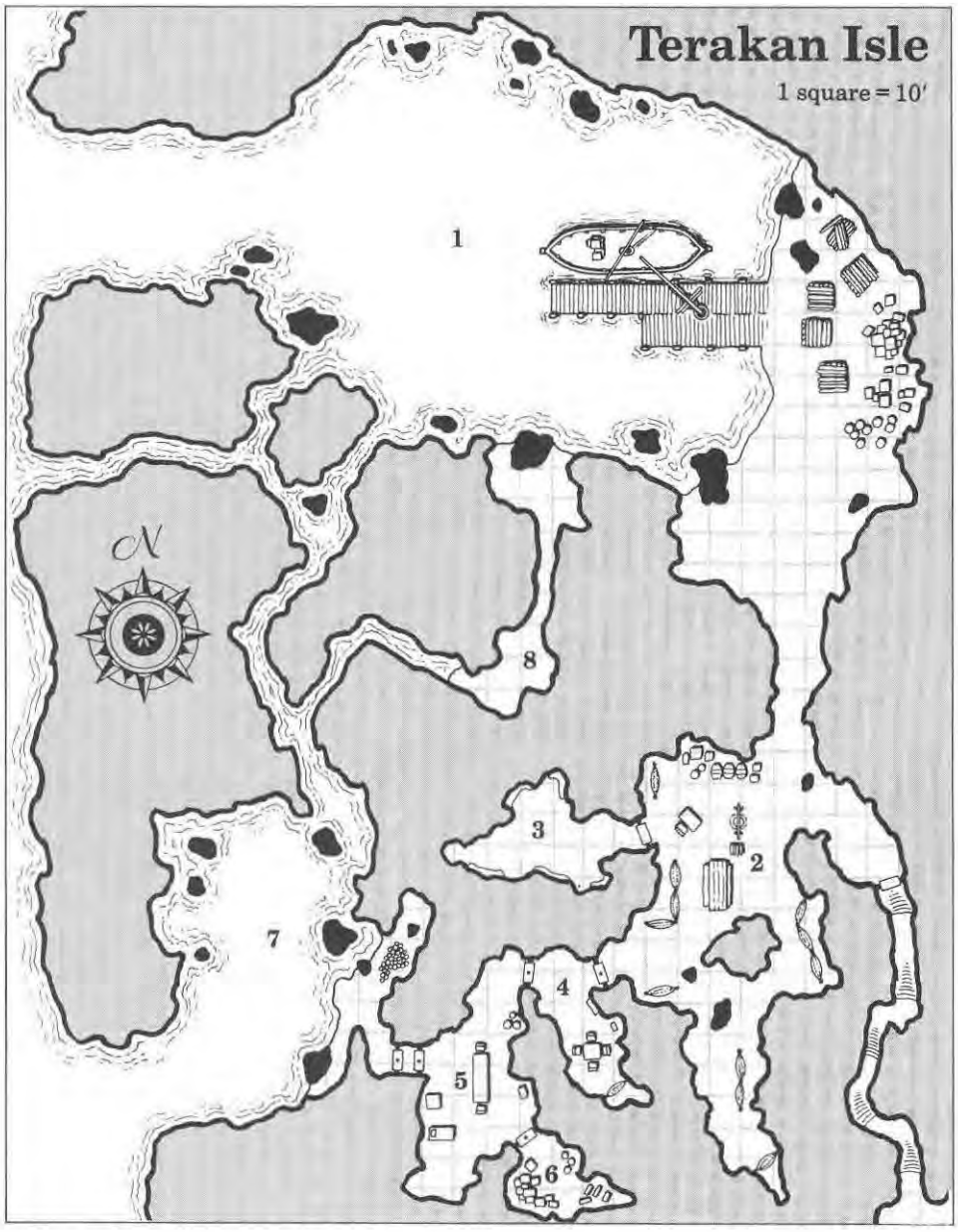
Donald Maskill, human pirate: AL LE; AC 10; MV 12; F2; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 12, D 9, C 12, I 10, W 11, Ch 9; ML 10; XP 35; leather jerkin, cutlass, dagger, gold ring (25 gp).

Human pirates (5): AL LE; AC 10; MV 12; F1; hp 9, 8 (×2), 7, 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 9; XP 15; dagger, 2d10 sp. These pirates are proficient with dagger, short sword, and cutlass.

Unless intruders use magic that makes them undetectable, it will be very difficult to invade the barracks and surprise everyone in it. If a battle breaks out, the pirates will try to slip past the party and escape into area 1. In the meantime, Niram's margoyles emerge from area 3 to join the fray, keeping as many PCs occupied as possible. Given the chance, the pirates will board the small merchant ship in area 1 and escape, even if Krell (see area 4) is left behind.

If the pirates can't flee into area 1, they will run through the door leading to the stairway to the surface. From there, they will hide on the island until the threat passes, ambushing any PCs who dare pursue them.

Each pirate, including the ones the party met in Narborel, has his own unlocked chest of clothing and personal items; these 22 chests hold no items of significant value. The crates and barrels stacked along the north wall contain foodstuffs plundered from merchant ships. Many of the containers



are clearly marked with the emblems of their owners. Scattered about the chamber are 20 daggers, 15 short swords, and 10 cutlasses, readily accessible to any pirate (or PC) in need of a weapon.

3. Margoyle Cavern. Unlike most other areas in the pirates' lair, this area is unlit. The cavern's current occupants prefer it that way.

> The jagged walls of this cold, unlit cavern are pocked with numerous niches and natural ledges. The ceiling is about 25' above you, and the floor is rough and uneven.

If they have not already responded to an alarm, the two margoyles pounce on any PCs who dare explore the cavern. The margoyles entered the docking cavern (area 1) one night and were *charmed* into servitude by Niram. They usually conceal themselves on ledges in the cavern's northern alcove, so the PCs have only a 20% chance of seeing them.

If released from the influence of Niram's *charm monster* spell, these savage creatures attack anyone they see, including the elf wizard.

Margoyles (2): INT low; AL CE; AC 2; MV 6, fly 12 (C); HD 6; hp 37, 30; THAC0 15; #AT 4; Dmg 1-6/1-6/2-8/2-8; SA swoop; SD camouflage, +1 or better weapons to hit; SZ M; ML 13 (17 while *charmed*); XP 975; MM/125 (Gargoyle).

The margoyles have the following treasures stashed in a niche near the ceiling of their cave, 21' above the floor: three golden goblets (50 gp each), a silver flask (25 gp) containing a potion of *healing* (three doses), and four silver beads with *Nystul's magic aura* cast on them (1 gp each).

4. Krell's Quarters. If the PCs get past the pirates (area 2) or Niram (area 5) without triggering an alarm, Morgan Krell is here. If he hears an alarm, the evil pirate captain flees before the PCs even reach the door.

> This 20'-high cavern is sparsely furnished. Iron rings secure a net hammock to the cave walls, a wooden chest rests against the east wall, and a table with four chairs around it stands roughly in the center of the chamber.

If he is surprised, the captain is in his quarters entering a passage in his logbook, his sword or spear within easy reach. If he becomes aware of intruders in Niram's chambers, Krell leaves his chamber through the eastern door and rounds up all the pirates from the barracks (area 2). He leads his men in an effort to repel the intruders but retreats to the ship in area 1 if the battle goes poorly.

If Krell hears a disturbance in area 2, he flees westward into the wizard's chamber (area 5) and alerts Niram. Niram then takes Krell with him when he retreats to the treasure room (area 6) to prepare his *teleport* spell.

Krell's chest is locked. The pirate captain keeps the key to this chest in his pocket, along with a second key that opens all the doors in the hideout. The chest contains various personal items, articles of clothing, a leather bag containing 63 gp, and a logbook in which Krell describes (in the common tongue) the exploits of his pirate band.

Morgan Krell, human fighter: AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; F6; hp 49; THAC0 15 (14 with specialization); #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type +2 (specialization); S 17 (+1, +1), D 17, C 14, I 15, W 12, Ch 16; ML 11; XP 975; *earring of protection +2, long sword +1,* spear, dagger, key to all locked doors. Krell is specialized

with his long sword, which is an aligned weapon named Lifebreaker. The blade is lawful evil and inflicts double damage whenever a natural 20 is rolled. Krell's magical earring is set with a tear-shaped emerald (500 gp).

5. Niram's Quarters. The elf wizard is seldom found anywhere but in his chamber. He spends the long idle hours between raids working on his spellbook and enlarging his spellcasting repertoire. Unless the PCs have rapid magical means of reaching Terakan Isle (like a *flying carpet* or *broom of flying*), Niram will have rememorized any previously cast spells (including *teleport*).

> This spacious, 25'-high cavern contains a bed, a table, a chest of drawers, and other miscellaneous furnishings, but there are few clues that provide insight into this chamber's inhabitant.

If unaware of intruders, Niram is seated at the table writing in his newest spellbook. The book currently contains all of his fourth- and fifth-level spells. His other spellbook, containing his first- to third-level spells, is kept in one of the drawers of the unlocked chest. The other drawers contain clothing, including one or two fine satin articles, and a sealed metal scroll tube with a *sepia snake sigil* cast on it. Inside the scroll tube is a contract written in the illithid tongue, agreeing to provide Niram with a spelljamming helm in exchange for 25,000 gold pieces (including the consignments of pearls and coral), the stolen timber shipments, and the pirates' secret base.

If Niram is trapped inside his living quarters (he has only a 1-in-10 chance of being surprised), he defends himself by any means available, beginning with a *hold person* spell cast on enemy fighters and spellcasters. He then resorts to using his *rod of beguiling*, his *dagger +2*, Maggie Leuwynn's *wand of polymorphing*, some other offensive spell (*lightning bolt* or *sleep*), or his *invisibility* spell (reducing his armor class to 0). Once he has both spellbooks in his possession (or at least the one with the higher-level spells), Niram *teleports* himself, his book(s), and his weapons into his secret hideaway (area 8).

If Niram knows that the party is in the complex, he does not confront them directly but relies on the pirates to do the dirty work. He gathers up his spellbooks and weapons and locks himself inside the treasure chamber (area 6). At the first sign of a disturbance in his living quarters, he *teleports* himself and his possessions to area 8.

In addition to his magical dagger, Niram has cast an *item* spell on a quarterstaff and hidden the resulting piece of cloth in the fold of one sleeve. He also keeps an invisible dagger strapped to his boot. He can draw either weapon if disarmed and cornered.

Niram Renotal, elf wizard: AL CE; AC 2; MV 12; W9; hp 28; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; SA surprise; SD infravision; S 12, D 16, C 12, I 17, W 15, Ch 16; ML 9; XP 2,000; *bracers of defense AC 4, rod of beguiling* (three charges remaining), *dagger +2, wand of polymorphing* (if successfully taken from Maggie Leuwynn in Narborel), invisible nonmagical dagger, quarterstaff (with *item* spell cast on it), key to all locked doors.

Spells: *burning hands, reduce, shield, sleep; darkness 15' radius, invisibility, web; hold person, lightning bolt, water breathing; charm monster, wall of fire; teleport.*

6. Treasure Chamber. If alerted to the party's presence, Niram withdraws into this cavern with all his valued possessions, *teleporting* to area 8 at the first sign of trouble.

> Tucked away in the farthest, most secluded alcove of this gloomy, unlit cavern are four wooden chests. Near the chests rest two golden urns and a bulky ship's bell made of tarnished silver. Also stored in this 20'-high cave is a stack of wooden crates and coffers.

The 11 crates are packed with coral, worth about 700 gp per crate. The dozen coffers hold pearls of various shapes and sizes, most of them flawed. The total value of the pearl hoard is about 8,000 gp.

None of the wooden chests have locks. Chest #1 contains 625 gp, 1,320 sp, and 1,575 cp. Chest #2 holds 400 gp, 915 sp, and 1,185 cp. Chest #3 is packed with 1,535 gp, 2,200 sp, and 3,290 cp. The gold urns are worth 350 gp each; the bell is made of solid silver and is worth 450 gp. All these treasures belong to the merchants whose ships were plundered by the pirates, and lawful-good PCs should return most or all of this treasure to its rightful owners. The total worth of this heavy hoard amounts to over 4,000 gp. (Niram still has a long way to go before he can afford that spelljamming helm.)

Chest #4 is actually a *charmed* mimic, which attacks anyone coming within its reach. The mimic's task is to protect Niram's treasure, and it will do so until slain.

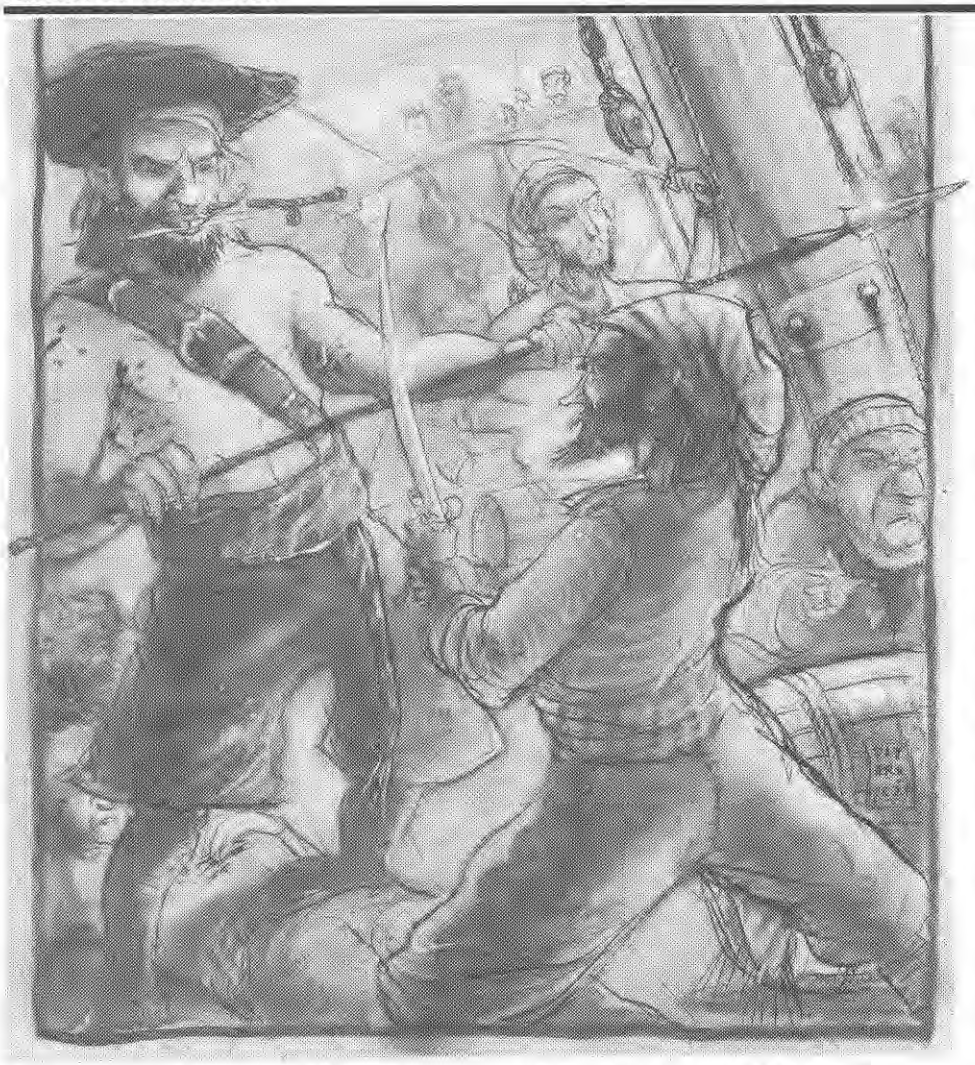
Mimic, common: INT average; AL N; AC 7; MV 3; HD 7; hp 35; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 3d4; SA glue; SD camouflage; SZ L; ML 15; XP 975; MM/250.

7. Dragon Turtle Lair. This area is off limits to everyone except Niram, for it is the lair of the *charmed* dragon turtle. This dangerous creature is always found in its lair, quite content to stay put until the pirates need its services.

> On a narrow ledge of rock adjoining this damp and flooded cavern is a disorderly pile of coins with a few gems and bits of jewelry thrown in for color. The bottom of the watery lagoon is too deep to be seen, and the area is practically devoid of light. The ceiling, jagged and wet, is nearly 40' above the floor of the ledge.

The dragon turtle is submerged at the bottom of its lagoon when the party first enters this cavern. It is relatively weak (as dragon turtles go) but quite intelligent—smart enough to realize it has a good thing going. Niram always recasts his *charm* spell on the monster before the pirates embark on a raiding expedition, because at sea the creature must be strictly controlled so that it does exactly what it is supposed to do. The rest of the time, the dragon turtle remains here, savoring its collection of treasure, which it can see clearly from the depths of the lagoon. It satisfies its hunger with occasional meals provided by the pirates and waits patiently until the next time it is called on.

The dragon turtle's treasure is roughly equivalent to the value of the hoard in area 6 (about 4,000 gp). In order to pay for his spelljamming helm, Niram intends to reclaim this hoard one day when the dragon turtle is out. Until that day comes, Niram is secure in the dragon turtle's ability to protect the cache. If the party somehow kills or disables the dragon turtle, a second pile



of treasure can be recovered from the bottom of the lagoon: a rotted wooden chest (unlocked) containing 2,660 sp and three pieces of jewelry (350 gp each), a *helm of underwater action*, a skeleton wearing an intact suit of *scale mail +1* (sized for an elf), a *scimitar +1 (+4 vs. dragons and reptiles)*, a *trident of warning*, a *crystal ball*, and *bracers of defenselessness*. The dragon turtle obtained these treasures long before the arrival of Niram and the pirates, who have never seen this hidden trove.

Dragon turtle: INT very; AL N; AC 0; MV 3, swim 9; HD 12; hp 45; THAC0 9; #AT 3; Dmg 2-12/2-12/3-30; SA breath weapon (scalding steam inflicts 20d6 hp damage, save for half damage); capsize ships; SZ G (24' diameter); ML 17; XP 10,000; MM/88 (smaller variety).

The dragon turtle can use its breath weapon three times per day (although once should be enough for adventurers caught in its scalding blast). The monster's breath forms a cloud of steam 60' long, 40' high, and 40' wide.

8. Niram's Hideaway. The tunnels leading to this area are flooded with water ranging from 5'-20' deep. Proficient swimmers can take advantage of the continuous 2'-5' high air pocket near the ceiling of the tunnels (no swimming underwater is required) and can reach Niram's hiding place with little fear of drowning.

Nonproficient swimmers will have trouble negotiating the waters. Unencumbered swimmers must roll under half their Strength to successfully dog-paddle through the tunnels. If the roll fails, the PC goes under and may drown (see the rules on pages 121-122 of the *Player's Handbook*). Nonproficient swimmers whose movement rate is reduced by encumbrance cannot swim through the watery passages; any attempt to do so requires immediate Constitution checks for drowning.

The ceiling in this cavern rises almost 20' above the water line, creating a pocket of damp but breathable air. The western tunnel drops sharply, with water beginning 5' below the cavern floor, while the northern tunnel remains level and dry. Both tunnels continue on into darkness.

Most of the pirates are not aware that this cavern exists, for they have never entered the narrow tunnels north of the dragon turtle's lagoon. Only Niram and Krell have been here before. Niram reaches this hideaway using his *teleport* spell, arrogantly choosing to remain near his lair and his treasures rather than fleeing to a more remote location. A *continual light* spell has been cast on the cavern ceiling, which Niram can dispel at any time to conceal his presence or cover his escape.

The cavern is devoid of furnishings and treasure. A narrow tunnel leads 30' northward to a deep recess looking out into the docking cavern (area 1).

If confronted in this chamber, Niram (and Krell, if present) withdraws to area 1, swimming to the dock if necessary. Neither the elf nor Krell will submit or surrender; both fight to the death. If Niram eludes the party, he remains on the island to thwart any attempt to remove his treasures. He has worked too hard to let adventurers steal everything he has accumulated over the last several months.

Concluding the Adventure

Using the pirates' small merchant ship or the *Scourge*, the party should be able to transport most of the stolen loot from Terakan Isle to the docks at Seapoint or distant Narborel. If Niram escaped, he may command the dragon turtle (if alive) to attack the PCs as they leave the pirate base. Using his *water breathing* spell, Niram hitches a ride on the dragon turtle's back and boards the vessel to deal with any PCs who escape the monster's scalding breath. Once aboard, the elf fights to the death. If Niram dies, the dragon turtle tries to sink the ship, devouring any PCs bobbing in the water and claiming all sunken treasures as its own.

Although the PCs may recover treasure worth thousands of gold pieces from Terakan Isle, they should be allowed to claim only part of this trove. The rest belongs to merchants eager for

its safe return. The DM is encouraged to invent methods of penalizing PCs who are overly greedy (revenge of the angry merchants, perhaps). Returning the stolen cargoes to their proper owners should garner 10,000 XP in rewards, which should be divided evenly among the party members (including hirelings and henchmen).

The PCs can claim the treasures hidden at the bottom of the dragon turtle's lagoon if they overcome the dreaded monster (an unlikely but not altogether hopeless prospect). The merchants will not claim ownership for any of these items. The PCs are also free to keep the small merchant ship if they wish. Its owner will happily part with the vessel if the party successfully recovered most of the merchandise from areas 1 and 6. Evald Ferrier, however, wants the *Sea Hawk* returned to Seapoint harbor. PCs who convince Maggie Leuwynn that her wand was stolen may be entitled to another reward if they return the wand to her intact. Perhaps she will give them a lifetime supply of free spell components. Bonus experience-point awards are left up to the DM.

If Niram Renotal escapes, he will undoubtedly reappear later with vengeance on his mind. With his treasures gone, he has little chance of acquiring the spelljamming helm that his illithid contact promised. He thus has good reason to get back at those who ruined his plans. Morgan Krell and his pirates are just as tenacious and may continue their raids on the shipping lane between Narborel and Seapoint—once they find a new headquarters, a ship, and sufficient crew to replace the pirates who were slain or captured on Terakan Isle.

The PCs may claim the pirate base on Terakan Isle for themselves, completely unaware that a spelljamming illithid merchant has every intention of using the base for future black market operations. The DM can create another adventure involving the arrival of the illithid's squid ship and its malevolent crew. The mind flayer may renew attacks on passing merchant ships, kidnapping their crews as food for the illithid "brain trade" and striking fear into the hearts of Narborel's citizens once again. If the PCs decide to rid Narborel of this latest menace, they may capture a spelljamming vessel and continue their adventures in a larger and much more dangerous frontier. Ω

Continued from page 9

An Essential Aspect

I am writing in response to opinions stated in the last few issue of DUNGEON Adventures. These letters focused on "excessive role-playing." In issue #48, Noah Keating said that making role-playing like reality is unnecessary. I beg to differ.

The DM who plans to conduct an entire campaign (not just a single adventure) needs to know as much about a character's personality as possible. Sure, you don't have to spend an entire hour role-playing a scene in which all the character does is buy needed materials for an expedition, but there should be real-life situations in which a player can develop his/her character's personality so that the DM can make notes for future situations.

For instance, the DM who wants to know a character's greatest fear can't just ask, because the player could create an impossible situation: "Balgorn's greatest fear is being trapped in a large kettle filled with assorted vegetables in boiling water on the plane of Gehenna facing a pit fiend with a smile on its face, a fork in one hand and a knife in the other, wearing a bib with the words 'Let's Eat.' "

I recently engineered a campaign in which everyday situations were used to bring about conflict within the party—not physical conflict (which all sane DMs fear) but emotional conflict. After the campaign was completed, the players thanked me for introducing intra-party conflict without the characters becoming totally untrusting of each other or running each other through.

So "excessive role-playing" (or "role-playing longer than usual") should not be a hindrance, but instead should become an essential aspect of your games. Anyone can flip through the pages of the *Monstrous Manual*, but not everyone can be creative.

Douglas Batchelor
Grand Prairie, Texas

Slipping Through the Cracks

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on a wonderful magazine. Throughout the years, I've seen many Letters-column discussions take place as to what exactly should be included in this magazine. Topics have included what game systems to include, whether there should be boxed text for DMs to read, and whether to include posters, maps, cards, etc.

Throughout it all, you have remained an excellent magazine, regardless of what you have decided to adopt or abandon. Your adventures are creative, thoughtful, and—above all—useful to a harried DM such as myself. Although I am not always able to use every adventure as is, at the very worst I am able to extract the core plot of an adventure and alter that idea to fit my world. Your magazine has been a godsend.

Issue #48 is a good example of the quality adventures you publish. I especially enjoyed "Honor Lost, Honor Regained," as did the one priest in my group. The role-playing which arose from that particular module was among the best my group has ever done. Karinza succeeded in escaping from Edgar and the party, all of whom have sworn to find and kill her. Karinza was last seen descending a deep chasm, possibly heading into the Underdark.

As good as the material in issue #48 was, however, there seem to have been a few technical errors. Your magazine is usually free of such mundane errors, such as the discrepancy between the level listed in the table of contents and the actual level of "To Bite the Moon," or the missing line on page 55 of "Sleeping Dragon." What happened?

Kraig Hughes
Darwin, Minnesota

The correct levels for "To Bite the Moon" are as listed on page 8 of that issue (4-6 PCs of levels 4-7). Our playtesters recommended lower levels for the PCs, so that they wouldn't simply blow the gnolls away before the PCs were affected by Argor's wish. *I made up the table of contents from a control sheet, on which we track the progress of each magazine element through the production process. Unfortunately, I forgot to make the level change on the control sheet.*

On page 55, just before the head "Agoron's Dream," the missing text should read: ". . . structures of solid cloud, creating the permanent white embankments that give the city its name." Ω

A close shave

BY J. BRADLEY SCHELL

Artwork by Charles Dougherty

"Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow" is an AD&D® game mini-adventure for one 1st- or 2nd-level warrior or rogue. The adventure can be set anywhere, as it makes no difference what the PC is currently doing. However, because of certain material requirements, the PC should be well shaven and recently barbered.

For the DUNGEON MASTER

The conjurer Cervate has always wanted to run things. He attempts to control everything, from the way his familiar eats to the way his spells work. This desire for control has recently led him to create what he calls *Cervate's summoning,* a modified *monster summoning I* spell. (See the sidebar for details.)

With his new spell, Cervate can summon the same being again and again for as long as he possesses some small part of the creature's body (hair, fingernails, etc.)

Because it is very difficult to get body parts from a living *monster,* Cervate has devised a method of summoning *adventurers* to do his bidding. (See the *Player's Handbook,* page 151.) Posing as a barber, Cervate collects the remains of his handiwork to use as the material components for his spell. Because his spell is not of great power, those adventurers with some experience (above 2nd level) are able to resist the summoning. A neophyte such as the PC, however, is not so lucky.

Cervate: AL LE; AC 6; MV 12; W5 (conjurer); hp 13; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; SD +1 to surprise roll (familiar), +1 to saving throws vs. conjuration; S 11, D 15, C 16, I 18, W 9, Ch 13; ML 13; XP 975; *dagger +1, bracers* of defense AC 7. Spells: *armor, charm person, color spray, grease, unseen servant; invisibility, Melf's acid arrow, summon swarm; Cervate's summoning, fly.*

HAIR GONE

Cervate—at 4'6" in his stocking feet—is often mistaken for a dwarf. His weathered face and his black bushy beard and eyebrows add to the effect. However, he is all too human. He uses his opponents' assumption to his advantage, surprising them with his magical talents.

Perhaps because of his shortness, Cervate has developed a domineering personality. He is very selfish, believing that everyone owes him something because they're tall and he's not. He prefers to use his magical ability to humiliate and degrade opponents rather than actually killing them. He's not fond of physical violence and will always have some agent perform violent acts for him.

Cervate is one of those "lucky" wizards who got a toad for a familiar. Mushroom, an extraordinarily large and intelligent **toad** (3 hp), spends most of its time either in a special pocket in Cervate's coat or on its stool in the wizard's cabin. Given Cervate's disposition for domination, his gentle and kind treatment of the toad is surprising. Because he has no other friends, Cervate will do whatever is necessary to protect the toad, even risk his own precious hide.

Cervate is a skilled barber and actor. When he is out collecting material components for his spell, he uses these abilities to pass as a traveling barber. He never collects components from people near his cottage, since he does not wish to raise the ire of the populace against him.

The conjurer lives in a one-room cabin located in a small stand of trees, several hundred yards north of a minor wagon trail. The trail winds its way for several miles to a major highway leading to a city or town of the DM's choice. Cervate has no close neighbors, and few travelers bother him in such an out-of-the-way location.

Cervate's cabin serves as his workshop, library, and home. To discourage visitors, Cervate has deliberately al-

TODAY, TOMORROW

lowed the outside of the building to fall into disrepair, but he keeps the inside well organized and immaculate. The furnishings are quite sparse; he has only a short bed, a few cabinets, a desk, two stools, and a footlocker. A three-legged stool sits in the corner for Mushroom.

The conjurer stores the material components for his spells in small, well-labeled vials on a rack inside a locked cabinet. The cabinet is always locked, and Cervate has the only key. He also keeps his three spellbooks here. In addition to the spells he currently has memorized, the books contain *find familiar, mount; scare; monster summoning I,* and *sepia snake sigil.* Each of the books has a *sepia snake sigil* inscribed on the front page.

Cervate has few obvious valuables; all of his wealth is put into his research. As a result, he has an extensive collection of nonmagical spell librams and components, worth approximately 3,000 gp to the right wizard. He keeps what currency he does have (120 cp, 17 sp, 25 gp, 15 pp) in a old sack in his footlocker.

The Summoning

The PC's first experience with Cervate's summoning spell should come a few days or weeks after the wizard, disguised as a dwarven barber, has cut the PC's hair. If dwarves are rare in the DM's campaign, the adventurer might remember Cervate when the PC is first summoned. Otherwise, there should be little reason to connect the summoning to the haircut.

Cervate summons the PC to deal with a foursome of wandering ruffians who are extorting gold from him. The PC appears outside Cervate's cabin directly in front of the four surprised toughs. The PC has no choice but to obey Cervate's commands. However, he is free to think what he will, and he will certainly remember all that occurs.

Bandits (4): AL CE; AC 7; MV 12; 0-level humans; hp 6, 5 (×2), 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 8; XP 15; MM/196; leather armor, shield, short sword (×2) or mace (×2). The bandits carry a total of 49 cp, 7 ep, and three gems worth 10 gp each.

These wandering ruffians thought the diminutive Cervate would be easy pickings. They were quite surprised to discover that he was an accomplished conjurer. Because of this, they are very uneasy and will quickly flee if their morale fails.

The PC must fight the bandits for seven rounds, after which he instantly returns to the exact spot he was summoned from. Cervate provides what magical help he can as the PC fights but will not engage in melee. If the bandits are not defeated before the spell's duration expires, Cervate abandons his home to the bandits and flies away. Because the PC was not particularly effective, the conjurer will not summon him again.

If the PC defeats the bandits, Cervate will continue to use his services, once or twice a month. Cervate has over 200 pieces of the PC's hair, so he is not concerned about running out of material components. In addition to combat, Cervate orders the PC to perform many menial and repetitive tasks around the cabin, such as drawing water from the nearby stream, cutting firewood, cleaning the chamber pots, and moving heavy objects.

A cautionary note: The DM should be careful about how often he uses this device to disrupt the PC's life and plans. An occasional diversion is fine, but remember that you are taking control of the character away from the player, however briefly. No one would want to play such a character for very long if this happens continually. Besides, don't forget that Cervate has the components to summon many adventurers.

There are three ways for the PC to avoid being the continuing victim of Cervate's spell. The PC could gain enough experience to resist the spell. He could try to wrest the material components from the conjurer, effectively ending the wizard's hold over him. If driven too far, the PC might kill Cervate.

The last two choices force the PC to search out Cervate and his home. No landmarks are visible from the wizard's cabin, nor is there anyone but Cervate to ask (and he won't say anything). Because the spell duration keeps the PC in the area for only seven minutes, it is impossible for the PC to learn much in the course of executing Cervate's commands.

Despite these difficulties, it should not be impossible to locate the conjurer. Divination spells can give clues to Cervate's location, as will old-fashioned detective work. Cervate's appearance is quite striking, and if the PC can deduce his sideline activity, it should not be too

Continued on page 24

Cervate's Summoning
(Conjuration/Summoning)
Third-level spell

Range: 30 yards
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 2 rounds + 1 round/level
Casting Time: 3
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

This spell is a variation of the third-level spell *monster summoning I.* However, only one creature of 1-2 hit dice is summoned, and the caster determines the exact creature to be summoned. If the caster tries to summon a creature that is no longer living or has more hit dice than the spell affects, the spell fails. When the spell expires, the summoned creature is always returned to the exact spot it was drawn from. Being summoned away so unceremoniously can actually be a blessing, in certain circumstances. If the subject of the spell is snatched away from the jaws of death, the vicious monster that owns those jaws may move on before the summoned one returns. A PC who has just fallen into a pit may welcome the summoning, as it will give his compatriots several minutes to figure out how to save him when he returns. On the other hand, the summoning could just postpone a nasty doom.

The material components for this spell are a tiny bag, a lit candle, and a piece of the creature to be summoned (a hair or fingernail will do) which is destroyed in the casting.

CASTLE OF THE BLIND SUN

BY PAUL & SHARI CULOTTA AND TODD BAUGHMAN

Magic and music gone awry

Artwork by Valerie Valusek

Shari is a preschool special education teacher whose keen insights on the blind are reflected throughout this adventure. She also gets the credit for coming up with a great plot from Valerie Valusek's drawings.

Todd is Shari's 18-year-old son, who will start his freshman year of college soon. Todd's research and imaginative insights contributed greatly to the castle's construction, inhabitants, traps, and items.

Paul gets credit for mediating disputes over plot details, writing the text, communicating with the editors, and enabling the family to survive this project while preparing to move to the West Coast.

"Castle of the Blind Sun" is an AD&D® adventure for 4-5 good or neutrally aligned PCs of levels 10-15. It can also be played by fewer PCs of higher level accompanied by several mid-level hirelings or henchmen, none of whom should be lower than 5th level. The total levels in the adventuring party should be about 56. One of the adventurers should be a bard, although a PC with a musical instrument proficiency may be helpful. The PCs must have magical items and weapons to succeed in this adventure. At least one of the party should speak elvish.

The adventure assumes that one of the high-level PCs has been given control of a fort, castle, religious stronghold, or other estate that borders on a nasty, inhospitable bog (although an arid desert or the like would also work). The geography within 100 miles also requires a mountain chain with two very prominent peaks.

To maintain the musical theme of this adventure, recommendations for optional mood music are given throughout the text. If these selections are not in the DM's collection, they might be found at a local library, or the DM may substitute his own music.

For the Dungeon Master

Fifty years ago, when the wizard Kamalotus was young and learning the ways of magic, he was ambushed in a sylvan forest by a gruesome pair of hungry ettercaps. Fortunately, a band of Rubato wood elves heard the commotion and came to his rescue just in time. The elves cured Kamalotus's poisoned wounds and allowed him to recover in their camp before sending him on his way. The young wiz-

ard never forgot the favor and swore to repay them somehow.

As he grew older, Kamalotus was disturbed to hear many tales about elves being forced out of their forests by the onslaught of human civilization. He devoted much of his adventuring treasure to developing a device that would conceal his friends' forest. After many years and much experimentation, he created a magical recorder, a musical instrument that would make the Rubatos' forest look, smell, and sound like a poisonous bog to all but the animals, wood elves, and other sylvan beings that resided there. To initiate and renew the enchantment, one elf must play the recorder during the first and last midnight of the Seldanqith festival. (See *The Complete Book of Elves (CBE)*, pages 19-20.)

The wizard delivered the recorder to the elves with the promise that, if they should ever need anything else from him, all they had to do was come to his tower, located several days' march to the west. The Rubato elves were surprised at such a magnificent gift but were delighted when they saw how well the instrument worked and heard how wonderfully the soft tones of the recorder complemented their elven instruments.

By this time, Kamalotus was known throughout the land as a powerful sorcerer and was a member of the adventuring party known as the Blue Griffon Company. He and his stalwart friend, the bard Gangwolf, made up the nucleus of this small group, which included others from time to time.

As they got older, however, nature took her toll. Gangwolf's eyesight began to deteriorate, and in a few months he was blind. No amount of curing or priestly spells could do anything for him, and it was obvious that his adventuring career was over. Even with his nightingale familiar acting as a seeing-eye bird, the disability was too severe for him to continue wandering about the countryside. Gangwolf realized this and announced that he would spend his last years in solitude so he could devote himself to musical composition, something he had little time for in his hectic days with the Blue Griffon Company.

Kamalotus agreed wholeheartedly with his friend's decision but was worried about Gangwolf's future. He knew all too well that many people in the world would take advantage of a disabled bard, especially a rich one. Moreover, years of adventuring had brought the duo not only great wealth but many enemies, and settling down in one spot might be risky. Kamalotus would have been happy to share his tower home with the bard, but the wizard knew from experience that when Gangwolf was in one of his moods to compose, it was unwise for anyone to be around him. Also, the wizard's tower contained breakable and dangerous apparatus, so the blind bard could never feel truly at home there.

Kamalotus came up with an idea that would address all these concerns. He drew up plans for a castle where Gangwolf could retire comfortably amid the booty of his long adventuring life, have the solitude he wanted, and remain concealed from the outside world. The wizard designed this grand home to appeal to Gangwolf's love of music and accommodate his blindness.

Preparations for the castle took far more magic and treasure than the creation of the elves' magical recorder, but eventually Kamalotus completed his research. Between the twin peaks of the Northern Barrier Mountains, during an eclipse of the sun, the wizard cast a series of powerful spells and sacrificed many magical items to finish the gift for his friend.

This fortress home, called the Castle of the Blind Sun, is invisible and incorporeal to those outside its walls because it is slightly out of phase with the Prime Material plane. People and animals can walk right through it without suspecting its existence. (Those within the castle cannot sense when someone is walking through the area.)

When construction was finished and Kamalotus was ready to say his farewells, he handed the bard a magical wooden box with a button set into one side. The wizard instructed his friend to push the button if he ever needed help, and the magical device would alert Kamalotus through the *crystal ball* that he kept in his tower.

There was, however, one flaw in the design of the Castle of the Blind Sun. Kamalotus could not get around this drawback without introducing greater problems. During a solar eclipse, the entire castle comes back into phase with the Prime Material plane, and outsiders can walk right in through the front door. Because of this defect (not to mention the ingenuity of evil beings), Kamalotus created a flesh golem to act as servant and bodyguard for Gangwolf, and attracted some galeb duhr as permanent guards outside the castle.

When the bard entered the castle, he was thrilled beyond words. Kamalotus spent a few days with Gangwolf to ensure that his friend became familiar with all the features he had created, then left for his own tower to plan his next adventure.

The Charlatan Octavia

All was well in the land for many years. No one bothered the Rubato wood elves because their beautiful forest appeared to be a treacherous bog, which many said was cursed. Gangwolf enjoyed his privacy, only occasionally venturing to the nearby city of Woodwind to buy supplies or visit the leader of the local musical troupe (who was always eager to try the bard's latest works). Soon Gangwolf's fame as an adventuring bard was overshadowed by his enormous talent for musical composition.

Then Mercedes came to town. At least, that was her name this time. Born as Octavia McFee, she was a no-good charlatan bard posing as a priestess of Tyr. (See *The Complete Bard's Handbook* (*CBH*), page 21.) Arriving with a wagonload of "health tonics," she set up a booth in the town square and attracted a large crowd with her beautiful soprano voice and lute. And her tonics seemed to work. (The first batch contained some watered-down potions of *healing*, and she threw in a few full-strength potions for those who were badly injured.)

Word spread like wildfire through town, and the lines of buyers grew. Cleverly, Octavia warned everyone that it often took a full week or more of prayer before the holy brew worked, but assured the townspeople that their faith would ultimately be rewarded. By the end of the day, Octavia had sold 500 bottles of tonic at 50 gp each. She converted most of the money to gems and went to celebrate at a local inn.

As she ate her dinner, Octavia chuckled over the image of angry buyers coming after her, waving their empty bottles of useless tonic. By the time that could happen, she would be far away. As she considered her next con job, Gangwolf entered the inn with Ludwig, the local orchestra leader. Octavia had heard that the renowned leaders of the Blue Griffon Company had retired to

this area, and accurately guessed the identity of the well-dressed blind bard. The charlatan had paid particular attention to rumors of the adventurers' great wealth (especially the treasure hoard of the green dragon Wyrmflut).

After Ludwig left, she ambled over and complimented Gangwolf on one of his greatest works (which she had heard in another town) and bought him a bottle of the inn's finest wine. She introduced herself as a cleric of Tyr on a holy mission to find someone who could help her compose a mighty anthem to her deity.

Gangwolf initially demurred, but the fast-talking Octavia hinted strongly that anyone who helped her might be greatly rewarded by the chief priest of Tyr, who could cure any infirmity or disability known to mankind. After many years of living in isolation, Gangwolf had grown lonely. The kind, melodious voice of the Tyrian cleric was very attractive, and her perfume played on another of his well-developed senses. For the first time in years, Gangwolf deeply regretted his inability to see, and the prospect of a cure for his blindness grew irresistible. After a few more glasses of wine overlaid by Octavia's heady scent, the bard agreed to take her home with him so that they could compose the anthem together.

One week later, Gangwolf was dead and Octavia was in command of the Castle of the Blind Sun. The bard died from poison soaked into the reed of his hautboy, which he played every evening. Before his death, the bard had shown Octavia most of the castle's enchanted features while trying to impress her, but he did not show her the treasure room (area 17). She discovered it on her own, but the room's magical protections have continued to confound her. Until she can safely loot the treasure, Octavia has decided to make the Castle of the Blind Sun her base of operations.

Despite her frustration with the protections of the treasure room, Octavia soon realized that this was not the only source of wealth in the castle. Gangwolf had started to compose many musical works that she could finish and claim as her own. Octavia would be the greatest bard in all history! But things did not work out quite as neatly as she planned. Although she had an ear for music, her skill in composition was far inferior to Gangwolf's, and her first work received only a scattering of applause.

Angrily, she went through all of Gangwolf's possessions to find anything that could help her achieve the status that she wanted so badly. While rummaging through his office, she found a very old letter from Kamalotus. The wizard mentioned the beautifully haunting music of the Rubato wood elves, which he had heard during his visits to them. Kamalotus's letter went on to express his satisfaction in helping to conceal their land as an evil swamp.

Now this was something, Octavia thought. New music and magic to boot! Comparing a map of the area to the description in the letter, she found two or three likely bogs where the elves could be and set out on her *broom of flying* to find them.

In a few days, she had found the elves' forest using her *eyes of true seeing*. (These affix to the eyes like contact lenses and work like the spell of the same name.) As she flew over the forest, she came upon a male wood elf serenading a beautiful Rubato maiden by playing a haunting tune on a recorder. The elf was handsome, and Octavia had been alone in Gangwolf's castle for a long time. She *polymorphed* herself into a seductive wood elf female and approached him suggestively, shoving the woman out of the way without a thought. Kentor, the male elf, thought that his love, Kelleen, was being attacked. Indeed, he knew all the wood elves of the forest, and this person was not one of them. Immediately suspicious, he pulled out his sword and charged, shouting an alarm. Octavia quickly realized she had miscalculated and cast an *invisibility* spell on herself just before Kentor's blade reached the spot where she had been standing.

A war party of wood elves responded to Kentor's alarm and began to search the forest. When they gave up, Octavia followed them to the elf encampment. She realized that these must be the elves whom Kamalotus had written about, because there were nice elven instruments laying about. She also noticed that, once the excitement was over, Kelleen and Kentor went off by themselves. Octavia fumed. How could the rustic elf prefer that wisp of a maiden over her?

The lovers' tryst was interrupted by a tall elf of regal bearing, undoubtedly the chieftain of the tribe. He scolded Kentor for taking the recorder out of the encampment, reminding him that the elves could not risk losing the instrument before the Seldanqith festival. Octavia realized that the recorder was the magical instrument that preserved the elven forest's disguise. She flew back to the castle to memorize a musical spell she had found among Gangwolf's papers, a spell she was certain would let her claim the magical recorder and those other wonderful elven instruments, as well as give her revenge on the handsome elf who had spurned her.

The Rubato elves' festival was short-lived. Invisibly, Octavia slipped into the encampment and played her lute, singing a *lullaby* spell (see sidebar). The spell worked excellently, and the elves went into a reverie, a form of elven rest that replaces the need for sleep (see *CBE*, page 34).

Lullaby (Enchantment/Charm)
Fifth Level, Reversible

Range: 0
Components: M, V (Singing)
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 1
Area of Effect: 10 yards × 10 yards per level
Saving Throw: Special

Lullaby is a special spell-like tune that is effective only when played on an instrument. It immediately puts all living humanoids within the area of effect to sleep; elves go into a state of reverie instead. Creatures with 9 or more Hit Dice are entitled to a saving throw vs. spell to avoid the *lullaby*'s enchantment entirely. The DM should select an appropriate tune for this spell (Brahms' "Lullaby," for example). The spell lasts forever, although affected creatures do not age or need special attention. Of course, they may be slain automatically, but even wounds will not waken them.

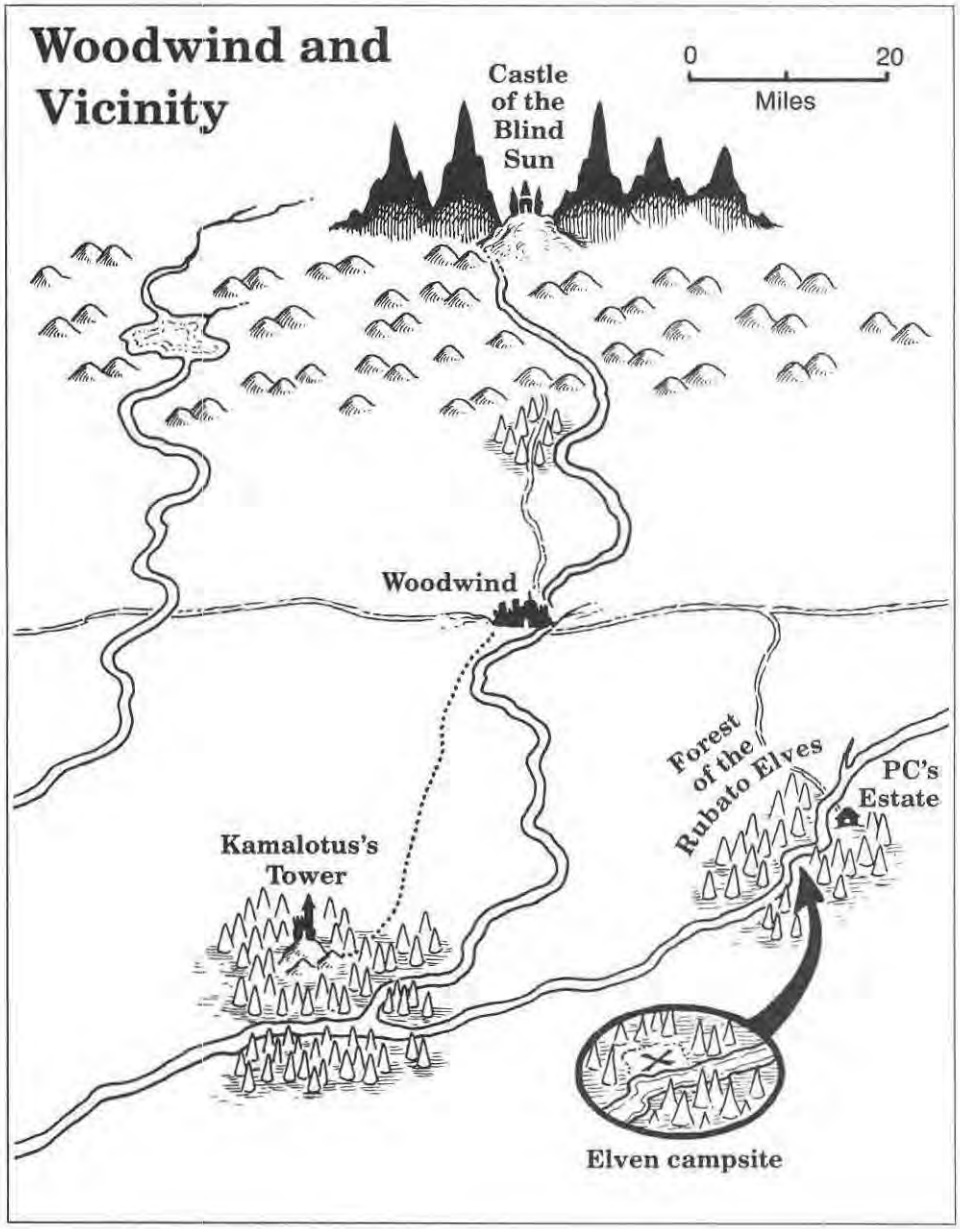
The only known way to bring a creature out of this spell's effect is through a *wish*, *limited wish*, or *arise* spell (the reverse of the *lullaby* spell). *Arise* also must be cast through the playing of a musical instrument, although it requires a full turn to take effect. The DM should select an appropriate rousing tune for this spell (such as the final movements of Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*). The *arise* spell will dispel *lullaby*, *sleep*, and *hold person*/*hold monster* spells.

Next, Octavia tied up Kentor and Kelleen and dragged them away from the encampment. She then sang the *arise* spell (the reverse of the *lullaby* spell), which brought the couple out of their reverie.

The charlatan made an offer to the elves: If Kentor and a few of the elves with their instruments would come to the castle and compose a few pieces of music for her, Octavia would gladly awaken all the others and things could go on as before. Kelleen and Kentor saw through the charlatan's lying ways, however, and cursed her roundly.

Octavia got very angry at this second rejection from Kentor, and she decided to take revenge. She collected all the elven instruments she could find (but not Kelleen's lute, which was stored in the hollow of a tree). Then she *polymorphed* Kentor into a blue griffon (a spontaneous decision triggered by her memories of the many blue griffon emblems throughout the castle) and warned him that if he tried to kill her, the counterspell to the elves' deep slumber would be lost forever. She suggested that the two elves reconsider their answer and informed them that she would be back in 30 days for their reply. By then, the concealing enchantment on the forest would have dissipated, and their precious solitude would be lost forever. Finally, Octavia informed the horrified Kelleen that Kentor would soon develop a desire for horseflesh—or worse—and warned the elf maiden to keep her lover well fed. Laughing hideously, Octavia mounted her broom and flew away, with no intention of returning.

Kentor chewed through Kelleen's bonds, but she found that nothing would bring her tribesmen out of their trance. Sighing, she dragged her kinsmen into the tribe's wooden lodges to protect them from the elements, then tried to figure out what to do next.



For the Player Characters

One of the PCs is on his estate and the others are visiting him. The PC is concerned about a series of horse killings that have occurred over the past few weeks. In each case, a horse has been found brutally slaughtered and almost totally eaten. The carcasses were surrounded by large tracks in the grass, but the trails led nowhere.

In the late afternoon, a peasant comes bursting into court and gasps:

> "Milord, there is evil sorcery afoot! I was out to fetch the cows from the west pasture, and what should I see but that the foul bog has disappeared! In its place is a wondrous forest of large oaks and elms. Never have I seen anything so amazing. Then I heard the scream of a horse over the knoll, and when I looked, there was poor Sunburst in the grip of a hideous winged beast! It had blue feathers, and its body was that of a large cat. It ripped and tore at the horse with large talons and an enormous beak, and began to eat her up. I tell you, it was horrible! Then the creature saw me and gave an awful squawk, and I ran like the wind! Oh, milord, something awful has happened!"

This peasant is as terrified as any the PCs have ever seen. If he can be calmed down, he remembers only a little more. The winged monster was huge, much bigger than a horse. He will not go back to the pasture unless his lord and a

strong escort go with him.

When the PCs get to the pasture, they can see that, indeed, a beautiful forest now exists where the nasty swamp used to be, just as the peasant said. On the other side of a small knoll lie the grisly remains of the horse Sunburst, surrounded by marks on the ground like the tracks found near the earlier horse killings. Close inspection reveals a small trail of blood heading west toward the new forest.

A PC who can fly or levitate sees that the forest covers as much ground as the former bog (about 25 square miles). The tree cover is so thick that it is difficult to see anything on the ground from the air, and mounted travel inside the forest is impossible. If the PCs elect to fly over the forest anyway, they notice nothing significant until they get to the clearing near the Rubato campsite. (See the map on the previous page.)

The Forest of the Rubato
(Recommended music: "Summer," from Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*)

As the PCs enter the forest, read the following to the players:

> You have been in some beautiful woods before, but none quite like this. The trees are truly majestic, and the damp cool air is fresh with the scents of moss, shrubs, and wildflowers. Birds fly about, singing merrily, and occasionally you see a chipmunk or squirrel dashing about in the upper branches of the trees. As you head deeper into the forest, the overhead cover becomes thicker, allowing only occasional glimpses of the sun. It feels like you are the first people to ever set foot here.

The DM should continue with similar descriptions as the PCs make their way through the forest. The birds' singing is actually a warbling alarm relayed all the way back to Kelleen. As an herbalist priestess of Corellon Larethian, she has the ability to talk with woodland animals, who assist her in protecting the Rubato elves to the best of their abilities.

Kelleen receives the birds' warning of intruders about an hour after the PCs enter the forest. She locates the adventurers within four hours and follows their party very quietly, waiting for them to make camp. As a wood elf who uses natural concealment and camouflage, Kelleen is undetectable 95% of the time. Even in the dark, she uses the thick, cool tree trunks to hide her from any PC who has infravision. She moves quietly in her *boots of elvenkind*. (See the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (*DMG*), page 161.) If the PCs fly to the elf encampment, Kelleen gets word from her birds and waits for them there.

When the PCs stop to make camp, Kelleen notes the location of each party member. She then calls out to several of the birds (owls if it is night) in their own language. The wood elf gives the birds small bags of *sleeping dust* and instructs them to fly over the campsite quietly and drop the dust on the PCs. (This magical sleeping powder affects elves as well as all other races.)

When all the PCs are asleep, Kelleen approaches and plays her lute. Through this enchanted instrument, she can cast *plant growth* and *entangle* spells twice a day. The combined effect of the spells makes the roots of nearby trees grow out of the ground and wrap up the sleeping PCs. Finally, the elf maiden casts a *detect magic* spell and removes the PCs' magical items and weapons. An hour later the PCs awake, totally snared and facing an elf maiden and a large blue-feathered griffon.

Kelleen: AL N; AC 10; MV 12; P5; hp 30; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 14, D 12, C 10, I 13, W 13, Ch 16. Spells: *cure light wounds, detect magic, detect poison, locate animals or plants; barkskin, charm person or mammal, slow poison; summon insects*. Weapon proficiencies: sickle, lasso, long bow. Nonweapon proficiencies: healing, herbalism, fire-building, religion, rope use.

Kelleen is 4'8" tall and weighs no more than 75 lbs. She has bright red hair, piercing blue eyes, and a deep tan. The elf maid wears a green and tan leather outfit with soft boots. Around her neck is a necklace made of maple leaves that always show autumn colors. Her cloak of honey-colored leather is waterproof and can be used as a skirt when tied around her waist. Although Kelleen is 103 years old, she is the equivalent of a 19-year-old human.

The young elf is very upset at what the "evil woman" did to her village, putting her tribesmen into a seemingly permanent reverie and turning her beloved Kentor into a hideous winged beast. She feels responsible for taking care of her tribesmen, keeping the forest clear of humans and other invaders, and figuring out a way to get back at the witch who caused all this trouble.

Blue griffon (Kentor): INT semi; AL N; AC 3; MV 12, fly 30 (C, D if ridden); HD 7; hp 40; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/2-16; SZ L (9' long); ML 12 (15 if near Kelleen); XP 650; MM/178.

The blue griffon is a large adult of its kind, standing 5' tall at the shoulder and having a 20' wingspan. Where a normal griffon has golden feathers and dusky yellow fur, this monster has blue and white feathers and blue fur. Its talons and beak look extremely powerful. The griffon eyes the PCs suspiciously and menaces anyone who tries to escape the entanglement. If necessary, it will take a nip at a struggling PC, automatically inflicting maximum damage each round.

Kelleen looks the PCs over and asks (not too kindly, and in elvish) what the PCs are doing in the forest of the Rubato. She listens carefully to the PCs' answers, attempting to gauge their motivations. Boorish or insulting PCs could get her so angry that she orders Kentor to kill them, bringing the adventure to an abrupt end. She means the PCs no harm, however, and would prefer they promise to leave her forest forever. If the PCs agree, she releases them one at a time and allows them to walk out of the woods without weapons or equipment. Later, she dumps their items in the pasture for the PCs to retrieve.

If the PCs are polite and show a genuine desire to help, Kelleen relates her story, as told in "For the Dungeon Master." If the PCs become belligerent about the devoured horses and the trespassing griffon, Kelleen shouts, "If one of your kind hadn't changed Kentor into this beast, none of this ever would have happened!" This outburst should provoke questions from the PCs to get the elf to tell her story.

The Elf Encampment

If the PCs can convince Kelleen to trust them, she takes them to the elf encampment atop a small hill in the forest and shows them the aftermath of Octavia's misdeeds. Three giant owls watch over a dozen well-camouflaged tents and two wooden lodges. The wolves of the forest have been attracted to the strangely quiet encampment, but thus far Kelleen, Kentor, and the owls have managed to keep them away.

Owl, giant (3): INT very; AL N; AC 6; MV 3, fly 18 (E); HD 4; hp 32, 29, 28; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 2-8/2-8/2-5; SA fly silently (victims have −6 to surprise rolls); SD 120′ infravision, quadruple normal hearing, cannot be surprised at night; SZ M; ML 12; XP 270; MM/27-28.

Spell-using PCs may try to bring the elves out of their reverie, but nothing works short of a *limited wish* (and even that lasts for only one hour). A full *wish* restores the elves to consciousness but does not bring back the elves' musical instruments. Indeed, the risk of Octavia returning and wreaking havoc all over again looms large. Kelleen tells of hearing "strange lute music and singing from the woods just before we all fell helpless to the ground." She voices a strong suspicion that Octavia may do the same thing again.

Returning Kentor to his elf form requires a successful *dispel magic* spell cast against 15th-level magic. Kentor must then make a system shock roll (75% for his 11 Constitution) to survive. But even if the transformation is successful, the awful truth emerges. Even though he still has a strong bond to Kelleen, Kentor now has the mind and personality of a griffon, even when changed back to his elf body. (See *Player's Handbook* (*PH*), page 161.) Kelleen cannot bear the thought of her lover's mind being forever gone and begs the PCs to find some means to restore Kentor completely.

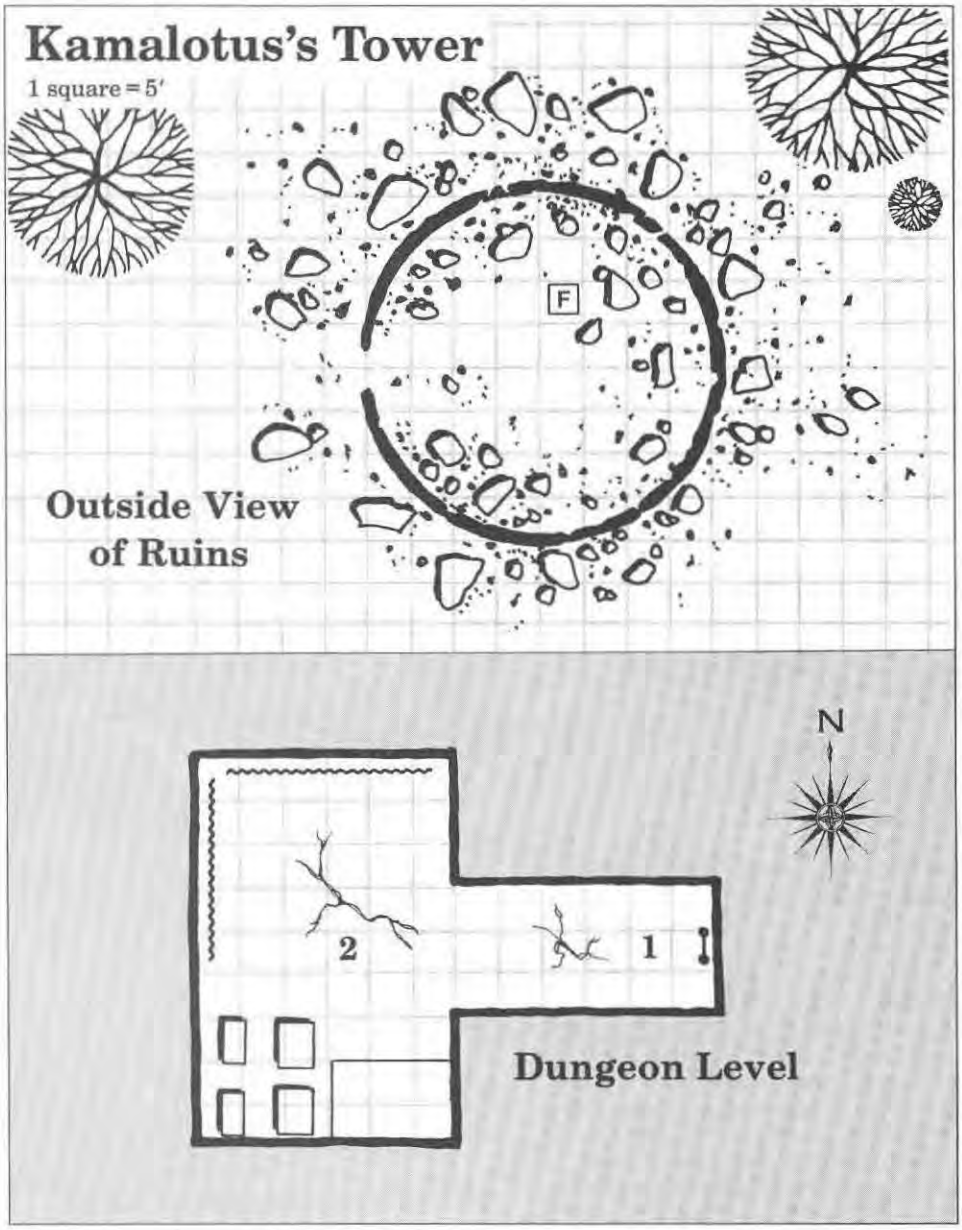
If the PCs ask what the evil woman looked like and where she went, Kelleen describes her as a human with very white teeth and red hair. She did not notice Octavia's eye color but can compare Octavia's height (5′) and weight (110 lbs.) with that of a PC of similar build. The Rubato maiden can tell the PCs that "the evil witch" flew off on her broom to the north, but this may have been merely a ruse. She took with her all of the elves' musical instruments except Kelleen's lute. The instruments are a pair of silver bells, a set of magical bagpipes, a long fiddle, the enchanted recorder, and a harp.

If the PCs insist on planning an ambush for Octavia, they are in for a long wait. After a few weeks of trying to stop Kentor from going on a horse hunt and of not seeing any sign of the woman, they should decide to leave and seek her out.

If the PCs complain that they have no more idea of where to look than she does, Kelleen looks thoughtful and then says:

> "There is one thing you could do. My father, chieftain of this tribe, told me that if we ever needed help, we had a powerful friend, a wizard named Kamalotus. Long ago the Rubato saved him from some awful monsters that came into our forest, and he swore that he would return and repay us. I was only a small child some forty years ago, but I remember Kamalotus bringing us a magical instrument, the recorder that my beloved Kentor played every festival to keep our forest concealed.
>
> "Kamalotus also told Father that, if we ever needed assistance, to come to his stone tower five days' travel west of here. It sits on a hill northwest of the junction of the two rivers. I have been thinking of going to beg the wizard's aid, but I cannot leave my helpless kinsmen in this condition. Perhaps you could go to Kamalotus and ask him to help us find this horrible woman."

The PCs have heard of Kamalotus who, along with the bard Gangwolf,



earned fame as a member of the Blue Griffon Company. They recall hearing that both the wizard and the bard retired from the adventuring life some years ago.

The PCs may ask for further assistance from Kelleen, but all she can offer are two potions of *healing*. They may want to take some *sleeping dust* packets, but Kelleen has only five of them left and needs them to deal with invaders to the Rubato forest. If the PCs insist on payment for their services, Kelleen admits that she has nothing she to offer, but she is sure that Kamalotus will be able to give them something to satisfy their greed. If the adventurers insist on a reward as the condition of their help, the DM should consider how closely the PCs are playing their chosen alignments.

When the PCs are ready to leave, Kelleen wishes them well but urges them to make haste because of the wolves and her fear that others will discover the Rubatos' forest. The elf woman discourages them from returning to the estate to fetch horses, saying that there is no time to waste, and mounts will only hinder the party's progress through the forest. If the PCs insist on returning to the estate for mounts, they lose two hours' travel time and their movement rate in the forest is one-third the normal rate.

Kamalotus's Tower

Getting to the tower of the wizard Kamalotus requires four or five days of hard marching through thick forest, and the crossing of a wide river. Flying PCs may take much less time. The DM may throw in some random encounters to make the trip to Kamalotus's tower challenging to high-level PCs (a wandering dragon, a hungry pair of bulettes, or something similar).

When the PCs are in sight of Kamalotus's tower, read the following to the players (modifying the description if the PCs arrive at night):

> About 10 miles northwest of the river junction, you see an awesome sight: Large trees have been blown over and completely uprooted, as if some horrendous power had swatted them out of the ground. No birds sing, no crickets chirp. Even the underbrush seems curiously flattened. Then you see the tower itself, or rather what's left of it. Atop a small hill, blackened shards of stone and brick lie on the ground around a circle of masonry that is all that remains of Kamalotus's home. Whatever caused the devastation around you appears to have originated here.

The tower was destroyed by an arcane explosion, the culmination of a wizards' battle between Kamalotus and his greatest rival, the evil Montage. These two sorcerers had been locked in a wizardly struggle of deadly proportions, and Kamalotus was losing. As a final act of defiance, Kamalotus broke his *staff of the magi* in a retributive strike (see *DMG*, page 154) to destroy Montage and his troll minions. Kamalotus may have been blown to another plane of existence; no remains of his body can be found in the wreckage. The search for Kamalotus, wherever he may be, is yet another adventure that the PCs may tackle when they have completed their present quest.

Montage, however, was not so easily defeated. With his dying breath, he used the last charge in a *ring of wishes* to wish that he and his trolls would not perish. They became spectres that

haunt the tower's remains and the surrounding countryside at night.

The aboveground ruins contain little but blasted rock and signs of extreme fire and heat. The circular rubble of the tower is 40′ in diameter. A PC with engineering proficiency can determine from the amount of fallen stone that the tower was about 35′ high. A *detect magic* spell reveals an aura of magical power still clinging to the tower remains and the scattered stones.

If the PCs dig through the rubble that has fallen within the tower, they can find the melted remains of an iron handle affixed to one of the thick flagstones. Using a crowbar, a *levitate* spell, or any other clever way to lift the stone reveals a 6′-diameter shaft that descends into blackness. A ladder in good repair is fastened to the wall of the shaft. Kamalotus's retributive strike went off at the top of the tower and blew through the two highest floors before reaching ground level, so everything beneath the protective flagstone is still intact.

1. Tunnel. The shaft beneath the flagstone descends 30′, ending at a tunnel leading to the west. This roughly circular corridor, 15′ wide and 8′ high, opens into a dark, forbidding chamber. PCs who *detect evil* feel a strong aura of evil that clings to the walls, ceilings, and floor.

2. Treasure Chamber. The chamber beyond the tunnel is 20′ high. The north and west walls are hung with magnificent tapestries. One of the tapestries depicts a blue griffon, the other shows a glowing castle nestled between twin mountain peaks and lit by the soft glow of a solar eclipse. (The DM can show the players the illustration on page 58.) A few trunks and chests have been pushed into the southwest corner, next to a table that holds a *crystal ball* displaying a faint image.

As soon as the PCs have entered the room, the master spectre Montage and his minions attack. (Recommended music: *Night on Bald Mountain* by Moussorgsky.) Two spectres come from behind the tapestries, one appears on a ledge at the south side of the room, two come out of ceiling cracks and attack from above, and the final two emerge from floor cracks to grab a PC's ankle. The master spectre Montage stands on the western ledge, dressed in glowing red robes. The other spectres look like translucent trolls. If the PCs detected evil there is no need for a surprise roll. Otherwise roll surprise, with each PC having a −1 penalty.

Montage, master spectre: INT high; AL LE; AC 2; MV 15, fly 30 (B); HD 7+3; hp 59; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA energy drain; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; MR immune to *sleep, charm, hold,* and cold-based spells as well as poisons and paralyzation attacks; SZ M; ML 15; XP 3,000; MM/323.

Spectral troll (7): INT very; AL CE; AC 0; MV 12; HD 8; hp 38, 40, 45; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 3-6/3-6/3-10; SD silver or magical weapon to hit, turned as spectres; SZ L (10′); ML 15; XP 1,400; MM/349-350.

Turned spectres fade back into the cracks in the walls, floor, or ceiling, and do not return for 1-6 turns. If Montage is destroyed or turned, each spectral troll must make a morale check each round. Any troll failing a morale check fades into the cracks, never to return.

After the PCs have disposed of the undead, they may look through the trunks and chests, all of which are securely locked. When opened, they reveal old clothes, knickknacks, and other odds and ends. Among the more interesting items is a diary kept by Kamalotus when he was younger. This book mentions his near death at the hands of ettercaps, tells of his rescue by the Rubato wood elves (see "For the Dungeon Master"), and relates an adventure in which the wizard and a bard named Gangwolf drove off a band of orcs with a combination of illusion spells.

Two items in all the clutter detect as magical. One is the *crystal ball* that sits on the table. The ball shows a horrible image: the skeletal remains of a human lie at the foot of a dark tree. A sprinkling of ugly feathers decorates the bones. This is an image of Gangwolf's remains, in area 16 of the Castle of the Blind Sun. A PC who continues to stare at the image has a 5% chance to see a harpy alight beside the skeleton and pick at the bones. No matter what the PCs do, they cannot cast spells through the *crystal ball* or cause the image to shift to something else until they get inside the castle and release the button on the magical box in Gangwolf's skeletal hands. The *crystal ball* weighs 15 lbs. and is extremely fragile.

The other magical item is a wooden music box (6″ × 6″ × 4″). Its silver top is engraved with a castle design identical with that on the tapestry. The words "Blue Griffon Company" appear just below the design. The box's wooden sides are decorated with finely painted blue griffons. When the box is opened, a small metal nightingale whistles a very nice tune. (Recommended music: "Fur Elise" by Beethoven.) Inside the lid is an inscription:

> A house is made of walls and beams.
> A home is built with love and dreams.
> You're always welcome at our home.
> Thanks always,
> Gangwolf and Tweeter

This box was commissioned by Gangwolf for easy access to the Castle of the Blind Sun. Kamalotus appreciated the gift but never used it; *teleporting* was so much easier. A bard using her ability to determine the general purpose of the box (5% chance per experience level; see *PH,* page 44) can learn that it is a key of sorts but nothing more. A wizard casting a *legend lore* spell or a priest casting an *augury* is rewarded with this cryptic verse:

> Three boxes were made:
> Keys one and all
> To the Castle of the Blind Sun.
> Open to a song and enter.

The PCs may conclude that Kamalotus died in the explosion that destroyed his tower, or they may believe that he is visiting his friends at this "Castle of the Blind Sun." If the PCs connect the blue griffon images on the music box and tapestry with Kentor's *polymorphed* form, they have a clue linking Kamalotus with Octavia. The other tapestry and the cover of the music box both feature the castle-and-eclipse motif, a correspondence that should send the PCs off to look for the mysterious castle. Any PC from this area knows that the Northern Barrier Mountains to the north are famous for the twin peaks that jut high above their companions.

En route to the mountains, the PCs must pass through the city of Woodwind. A kind DM may drop a hint to the PCs that they have heard of Mother Creedy, an astrologer in that city. Perhaps she can decipher the symbols on the tapestry and box. Also, a PC with astrology proficiency may determine that the eclipse depicted is the key to finding the castle. A second successful check allows the PC to determine when the next eclipse will occur (in about seven days).

Woodwind

When the PCs arrive in Woodwind, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> It has been hard traveling through the wilderness, and it will be good to reach an inn for a hot meal and comfortable bed. Ahead lies the city of Woodwind, a walled town of about 15,000 people. You recall that this place is well known for its famous musicians, its fine inns, and its sly merchants. Perhaps here you will find some clues to Kamalotus's whereabouts, the strange castle, and the mystery of the evil woman who has inflicted such tragedy on the Rubato elves.

The DM should allow the PCs to wander through the city freely once they have each paid a 5-sp toll to get in. Woodwind has a town square, a few temples (DM's choice of deities, but Tyr is not one of them), and the local lord's manor. A bustling marketplace deals mostly in leather goods, foodstuffs, and woodcraft. The PCs see several posters depicting a human female with a wide smile, a gauze band across her eyes, and a strange symbol about her neck (the scales of justice set on a hammer). A PC making a successful religion proficiency check (or one who worships Tyr) can identify the holy symbol and garb as that of a Tyrian cleric. Below the woman's image, the poster says:

> **Wanted for Fraud!**
> **Mercedes, Self-proclaimed Healer**
> **Anyone offering information leading to her capture and arrest will be rewarded with 2,000 gold pieces. Any who bring her to justice will receive 4,000 gold pieces. Report all information to the Town Watch, Lord's Manor.**

A Visit to the High Sheriff

PCs who inquire at the office of the town watch meet the high sheriff. Faustus Belard is not overly concerned with the elves' plight, but he becomes very interested if the PCs express interest in going after "Mercedes." So far, all bounty hunters who have searched for her have returned empty-handed—or not returned at all. The sheriff describes the trickery that Mercedes used on the townspeople of Woodwind. (See "For the Dungeon Master.") Many people saw her, and the high sheriff can give the PCs a good description, which curiously matches Kelleen's description of Octavia, except for hair color. (Kelleen said Octavia's hair was red; the sheriff says Mercedes's hair is blonde.) Their descriptions of the woman's strange smile are identical.

Faustus relates that the last people who saw Mercedes were Bronkus, the innkeeper of the Gilded Bugle Tavern, and Dr. Ludwig, leader of the local musicians. She was last seen leaving the tavern with Gangwolf, a famous blind bard who has composed many fine musical pieces. No one knows where the bard lives except that it is somewhere in the Northern Barrier Mountains. If the PCs ask about Kamalotus, the high sheriff can tell them that no one has seen the wizard for about a year. It is rumored that he has a tower far to the south.

If the PCs ask about eclipses, the sheriff says:

"Don't know much about such things, myself. Now, Mother Creedy, she dabbles with star charts and the like. You might want to ask her. I do remember about ten years ago, we had an incident where the sun went black for an hour, and in the dark we could see a bright flash far to the north, up in the mountains someplace. Real strange it was. Everyone worshiped in the temple that week!"

The sheriff's final words of wisdom to the PCs are:

"We sure would be grateful if you could find this fraud! The town is up in arms about how much money she stole from us, and the clerics have been unrelenting in their sermons about our lack of faith in their healing powers. Of course, the Northern Mountains are quite dangerous, so if you try to find her, be careful. There's magical creatures that live up there, I've heard tell: bird women who sing the sweetest songs to charm a young lad's ear, but instead they tear his heart out and eat it!"

Mother Creedy, the Astrologer
(Recommended music: "Neptune the Mystic," from *The Planets* by Holst)

The local fortune-teller, astrologer, and herbalist has a decrepit shop in an alley just off the city market. This establishment is marked by a weatherbeaten sign depicting a large hand surrounded by moons, planets, and stars. There is a single locked door to the place and a small window so filthy that one cannot see inside. The PCs must bang on the door for several minutes to gain admittance.

Mother Creedy is a short, thin old woman dressed in tattered black robes. She appears to be in her eighties, and her deeply lined face, nose, and chin have grown several hairy warts.

When the PCs state their business, Mother Creedy anxiously ushers them into a very dusty sitting room featuring a table and several rickety chairs. Atop a bookshelf sits a black cat with shining yellow eyes, and the entire place reeks of mildew. The table holds two black candles and a deck of cards.

Mother Creedy listens very patiently to the PCs, then asks to see the eclipse design (either the tapestry or the music box will do). She ponders for several minutes, then pulls out some dusty books from a shelf, along with rolled up charts of the stars and planets. After a few moments, she says:

"Ah yes, the Castle of the Blind Sun. The famous wizard Kamalotus is said to have built it for his good friend Gangwolf, his fellow adventurer and best friend who went blind some years ago. The wizard and the bard, along with several others, were known as the Blue Griffon Company.

"After the bard lost his sight, Kamalotus created a magical castle for him, near the twin peaks of the Northern Barrier Mountains. It is said that the wizard devised this structure with many a wondrous spell during the last solar eclipse, and that the castle cannot be found until another eclipse occurs. You are in luck. I see by my charts that the next eclipse is due in four days.

"You must take care if you go looking for the castle. The mountains are said to be haunted by powerful monsters, singing women who devour all those ensnared by their sweet voices. If you find the castle, you must enter quickly, for once the sun is no longer blind, the castle will vanish."

If asked about Mercedes, Mother Creedy knows only what other townspeople have told her. She does not get out often and never saw the charlatan. If the PCs mention that Mercedes was last seen with Gangwolf, the elderly astrologer looks very concerned.

Mother Creedy charges 5 gp for her services. Any good-aligned PC can see that she is obviously on the verge of poverty. Any PC who gives her more than 5 gp should receive one experience point per extra gold piece, to a maximum of 300 XP per PC.

Mother Creedy, astrologer: AL N; AC 10; MV 6; 0-level human; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 0; Dmg nil; S 5, D 8, C 9, I 16, W 15, Ch 9.

The PCs may question other townspeople about Kamalotus, Gangwolf, and Mercedes. No one knows more than the sheriff, but the townsfolk may provide the PCs with anecdotes about how they were gypped by the fake cleric of Tyr. If the PCs inquire about twin mountain peaks, the townspeople point to the north and state that they are about two days' march away.

The Castle of the Blind Sun

The north road out of Woodwind passes outlying farms and logging camps, then stops abruptly in the foothills south of the mountains. From there, the terrain is rocky and the tree cover is thin. If the PCs have come this far on horseback, they must abandon their mounts before going farther, but a sure-footed mule can easily continue. Flying PCs, of course, can avoid all of this discomfort and reach the castle area in just a few hours.

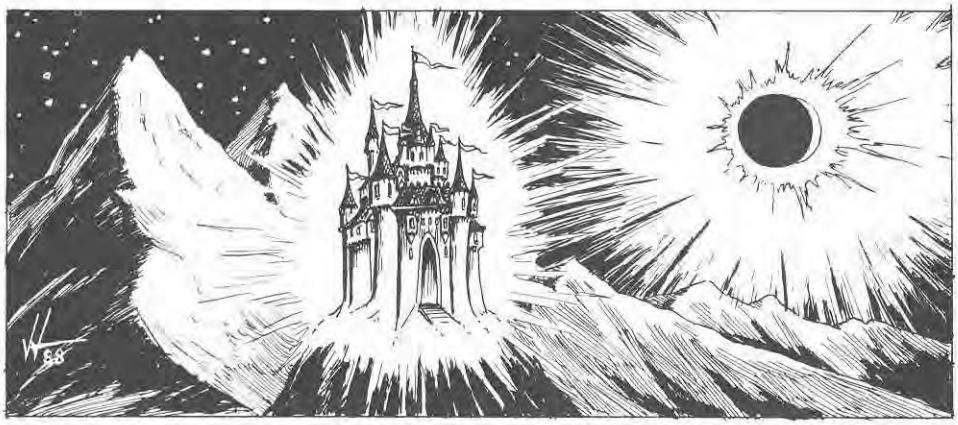
When the PCs find themselves at the bottom of a large boulder-strewn hill, they are just below the two prominent peaks of this mountain range. The terrain is lightly forested at the base of the hill, and the ground is strewn with several unusual rock formations.

Before the PCs can proceed, they notice a strange sight: a bunny, a chipmunk, and a porcupine sit together, looking anxiously up at the summit of the hill. If the PCs don't find this strange and investigate, the DM may be lenient and allow a ranger, druid, or PC with animal lore proficiency to make a Wisdom check to realize the oddity of these three animals associating with each other. PCs who approach the trio gently and use a *speak with animals* spell on any of the creatures discover that the animals seem very worried. They speak of "our big friend" who went up the hill with the big rocks and disappeared. Their friend told them that she would return soon, but it has been four "suns" and the animals cannot decide what to do. Sharp questioning of the animals reveals that their unknown friend used the "pretty birdy box" to "make friends with the big rocks" before she disappeared with them.

The animals are companions of Affettuosa, a meistersinger bard (see *CBH,* pages 41-44) who is a close friend of Gangwolf. She owns a music box like the one the PCs found in Kamalotus's keep and uses it to gain access to the secret passage guarded by the galeb duhr (see below). The meistersinger's visits to Gangwolf are usually short—a day or two at the most—and she always leaves her animals outside.

The Secret Entrance

Although Mother Creedy told the PCs that the Castle of the Blind Sun could not be found until the next solar eclipse,



there is another way to get in and out of the castle. If the PCs wait for the eclipse, the castle materializes and they can gain entry through the front door. If, however, the PCs step out of the forest onto the boulder-strewn hill during daylight hours, they will certainly encounter the galeb duhr who guard the castle's secret entrance.

Behind one of the large piles of boulders is a hidden tunnel that winds under the hill and into the castle. After sunset, the PCs can wander all over the hill looking for an entrance, but their efforts will be fruitless. The magic of the place thwarts divination spells that might otherwise reveal the tunnel's location. The galeb duhr, who are active only during the day, will not bother the PCs at night unless they start to dig close to the secret entrance. The DM should note that the galeb duhr are not detectable by infravision (if using the optional rule on page 119 of the *DMG*); their body temperatures are the same as the earth and rocks of the hillside.

During daylight, a low melodic humming fills the air two rounds after a PC steps out of the forest and begins to climb the hill. (The DM should hum something like the opening to Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, but even a common tune like "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean" will do.) The low, gravelly humming comes from the galeb duhr, and it gets louder and more menacing for three rounds. If the PC leaves the area, the humming abruptly stops but will resume two rounds after a PC steps back onto the hillside. The galeb duhr can feel even an *invisible* PC's vibrations on the hillside.

If the intruder doesn't leave the hill after three rounds, two rock formations suddenly to come to life and walk toward the PC on stubby appendages. One round later, two more rock formations come around the sides of the hill. As they approach, one of the large rocks states in a deep, grating voice, "Get off! You are not welcome!" Attempts at negotiation with the rock creatures are fruitless. Mentioning the names "Kamalotus" or "Gangwolf" has no effect, nor do any other attempts to reason with the galeb duhr. Even offerings of granite, the galeb duhr's favorite food, have no effect; the galeb duhr have plenty of granite all around them.

Only two actions elicit a friendly reaction from the galeb duhr. If a PC opens and activates the music box they found in the ruins of Kamalotus's tower (the "birdy box" mentioned by Affettuosa's animals), the largest galeb duhr says, "Ah, guests. Please follow me." It escorts the PCs to a pile of boulders and casts a *passwall* spell, revealing a 6′-diameter tunnel that runs 30′ straight ahead to a dead end. The PCs can simply walk through the end wall with their eyes closed to come out of the tunnel in area 4 of the castle.

PCs who fight the galeb duhr will be frustrated, because the rock creatures retaliate fiercely, animating boulders and striking hard with their rocky fists. Moreover, they are nearly impossible to kill. If beset by flying PCs or wounded badly, they meld back into the ground, to reemerge later and inflict more animated boulders on the intruders.

Without powerful magical assistance, the PCs will not be able to find the entry to the tunnel. It is covered by thick rock that, along with the magic of the place, blocks *detect magic, find the path,* and similar spells. A wizard with good luck (20% chance) might stumble across the tunnel with a *dig, passwall,* or similar spell.

Galeb duhr (4): INT very; AL N; AC −2; MV 6; HD 10 each; hp 74, 70, 66, 61; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 4-24/4-24; SA cast *move earth, stone shape, passwall, transmute rock to mud, wall of stone* at 20th level once a day; *stone shape* at will; animate 1-2 boulders within 60 yards (AC 0; MV 3; HD 9; hp 41, 36; THAC0 11; Dmg 4d6); SD immune to normal fire and lightning, +4 bonus against magical fire attacks; MR 20%; SZ L; ML 17; XP 10,000 each; MM/122.

The Eclipse

(Recommended music: "Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age," from *The Planets* by Holst.)

If the PCs avoid the galeb duhr and wait for the solar eclipse that Mother Creedy forecast, read the following to the players:

> Although it is the middle of a cloudless day and the sun is high, the sky begins to darken. The forest birds return to their roosts, their songs stilled as at dusk. A lone cricket begins to chirp, joined by several of its fellows as the light continues to fade.
>
> Atop the hill you see an even more wondrous sight: the faintly glowing outline of a moderately sized castle. As the sky grows darker, you begin to see the glowing, translucent walls of the structure. Finally, when the eclipse is at its peak, the castle becomes solid and you see three broad steps leading up to massive double doors.

Once the castle is solid, the PCs have two turns to get into the structure. If they fail, they will have to find the other entrance because the castle's form will dissipate as the eclipse ends.

The galeb duhr become dormant during the eclipse, so the PCs may walk up to the castle's front door. However, even a small amount of weight on any stair tread activates an alarm in area 2. A thief's successful find-traps roll can detect the nature of these stairs, as can a priest's *find traps* spell.

The front doors are barred. They can be opened by casting a *knock* spell. If the PCs use the large treble-clef-shaped door knocker, the doorkeeper appears in three rounds. Adagio is the 8′-tall flesh golem butler that Kamalotus created to protect Gangwolf. The wizard was able to cover up all the stitches and the deathly scent that these creatures usually exude, but he was not able to disguise Adagio's yellow pallor. The butler

is dressed in a fine tunic, shirt, pants, and shoes. The tunic bears the embroidered emblem of a blue griffon.

Invisibility will not get the PCs past Adagio, as he is quite large and takes up the entire doorway (although an *invisible* halfling or gnome might crawl between his legs). Adagio stands aside and bows to the PCs if one of them opens and plays the music box from Kamalotus's tower. He then escorts them to area 4. If the box is not used, Adagio sings the following (rather flatly, but to the recognizable tune of "Oh Come All Ye Faithful"):

O welcome ye travelers
To our lonely castle
O sing ye, O sing ye
Of why you have come.
Come lift your voices
Let us know your purpose
We need to know your purpose
We need to know your purpose
We need to know your purpose
To let you come in

When Adagio finishes his song, he awaits the PCs' reply. If the adventurers do anything other than singing or playing the music box, the flesh golem attacks to destroy the intruders. It is not necessary for the PCs to sing to the same tune as the butler; any song will do, but it must include a line that mentions Gangwolf or Kamalotus. Omitting such a line also causes Adagio to attack fearlessly until destroyed. When reduced to half his hit points, he begins singing "The Blue Griffon Fight Song" (see sidebar), which summons the enchanted armor guard from the entry hall (area 1). If the PCs get involved in a battle with the golem, Octavia will not hear it.

Adagio, flesh golem: INT semi; AL N; AC 9; MV 8; HD 9; hp 40; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 2d8/2d8; SD struck only by magical weapons; fire or cold spells *slow* for 2-12 rounds; electrical attack restores 1 hp per die of damage; SZ L (7½' tall); ML 20; XP 2,000; MM/167.

PCs who gain entry through an acceptable song or use of the music box are escorted to area 4. Adagio asks them to have a seat, then stands quietly at attention. Gangwolf told Adagio to obey Octavia's instructions and be sure to do nothing that might hurt her while she was a guest in the house. After she killed the bard, Octavia told Adagio that Gangwolf had gone on a long trip and would not return for a very long time. She neglected to give Adagio instructions on notifying her if he admits guests, because she is unaware that this is one of his duties.

If the PCs try to converse with Adagio, they find he has limited intelligence and reasoning capabilities. Here are some typical questions the PCs may ask, and Adagio's answers:

—*Where is Gangwolf?* "On long trip."

—*When will he return?* "Don't know. Octavia not say."

—*Who is Octavia?* "Pretty lady."

—*Where is Octavia?* "Upstairs with Bruno."

—*Who is Bruno?* "Big guy with big sword."

—*Will you go get Octavia?* "Okay." (Octavia is alerted and instructs Adagio to destroy the intruders. He tries his best to do so, with the help of the enchanted armor in area 1.)

—*Will you take us to Octavia?* "Sure." (When the golem takes the PCs upstairs, Octavia yells, "Adagio, you idiot, they're intruders! Kill them!")

If the PCs insist on a tour of the castle, Adagio obeys but does nothing to help them. If they get into a fight, he roars, "No fighting in castle!" and attacks random opponents (friend or foe, but not Octavia) until all fighting stops.

Special Features

Because it was designed to accommodate a blind person, the Castle of the Blind Sun has several features not found in other castles. Blind people greatly fear fire, so the only open flames are confined to the fireplace in the kitchen (area 7) and the fireplace in the study (area 6). The entire building is under a massive *control temperature* spell, keeping the interior at a comfortable 70 degrees. All rooms (except where noted) contain *continual light* globes for visitors such as Affettuosa and Kamalotus.

The castle's floors are laid out in perfect 3' × 3' squares with small indentations between the tiles. Gangwolf could navigate about the castle by counting tiles with his cane.

Most of the furniture is affixed to the floor with *sovereign glue* to give continuous reference points to the blind bard. Any attempt to move the furniture requires a successful bend bars roll, and even then the furniture will break before the glue gives way.

Ground Floor

1. Entry Hall. This large foyer has white, evenly spaced floor tiles and stone walls. On the wall opposite the door hangs a beautiful tapestry of a blue griffon, a gift from a noble who was rendered a great service by the Blue Griffon Company. A set of dwarven field plate armor stands in the northwest corner. The only dwarf member of the company (now deceased) would be pleased to know that his armor was enchanted by Kamalotus to guard their friend Gangwolf. The enchanted armor will not animate unless Adagio sings "The Blue Griffon Fight Song," or some greedy PC tries to haul it away. Playing the music box causes the armor to become inactive for one turn.

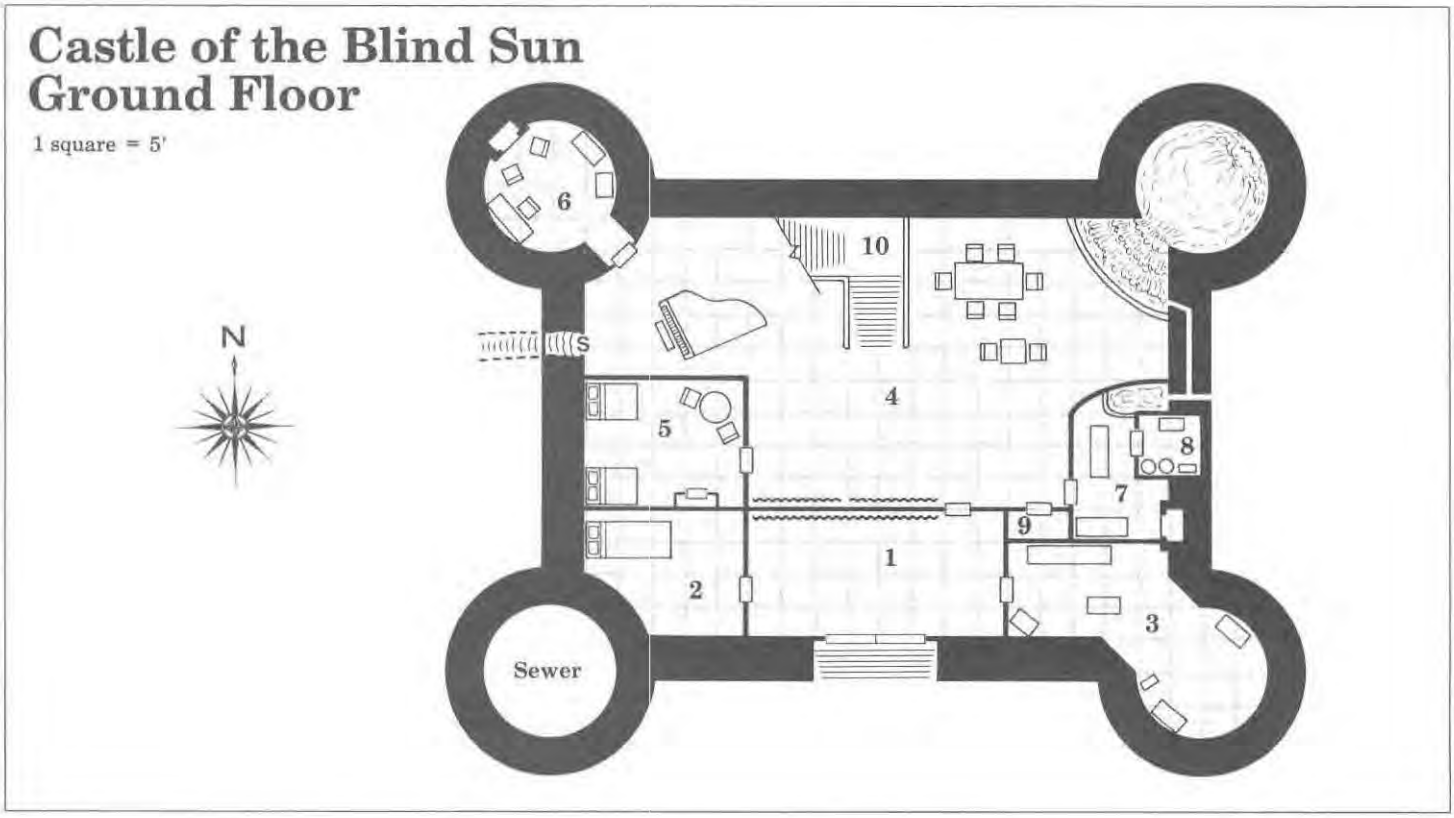
Enchanted armor: INT low; AL N; AC −1 (equivalent to *full plate armor* +2); MV 6; HD 5; hp 40; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 2-7/2-7 (spiked metal gauntlets); SD immune to mind-affecting and biological spells or items; half damage from heat or cold attacks; SZ M (4' tall); ML 20; XP 2,000; MC RAVENLOFT® Appendix, Doom Guard (modified).

2. Adagio's Room. This plain room contains a simple bed that the golem Adagio lies down on whenever his services are not needed. On the wall next to the bed is a cuckoo clock that does not tick, no matter what the PCs do. If a visitor knocks on the front door, steps on the outside steps, or enters through the secret passage into area 4, the shutter on the clock opens and a 1"-tall statuette of a little man with a triangle and bar comes out. The statue strikes the triangle once if a visitor is at the front door, twice if someone has come through the secret door, and three times if someone pushes the button on the headboard in area 18.

If the PCs enter through the front door without alerting Adagio and find the golem in here, he greets them in much the same manner as if he had

Blue Griffon Fight Song
(to the tune of "My Country 'Tis of Thee" or "God Save the Queen")

Blue Griffons come to me,
We fight for liberty,
They shall not pass!
Smite them with sword and mace,
Our name we'll ne'er disgrace,
'Gainst each and every evil band
Here we make our stand!



greeted them at the front door (singing his song, and calling on the enchanted armor in area 1 for aid if he needs it).

3. Storage Room and Workshop. Storage cabinets and boxes line the walls of this chamber, which extends into one of the castle's round turrets. The storage areas contain various instrument parts and supplies: strings, bows, nails, glue, wood, pegs, rosin, polish, oil, rags, etc. Repair materials lie scattered on a large table in the center of the room. Affettuosa used these tools when she repaired and tuned Gangwolf's instruments. The circular portion of the chamber is filled with old trunks, boxes, and furniture. Here Gangwolf stored old clothes and shoes, summer clothes in the winter, winter clothes in the summer, skis, boots, poles, and bindings. (Gangwolf loved to ski with his familiar perched on his shoulder, chirping directions.) This room is a perfect place to hide, rest, and regain spells if Octavia has not become alerted to the PCs' presence.

4. Main Hall. A waterfall in the northeast corner cascades pleasantly from ceiling level down a set of graduated granite steps. The cool, clear water gathers in a small pool with drains on either side. Large rainbow trout swim in the 4'-deep water. A dinner table and a chess table are all the furnishings. Gangwolf enjoyed playing chess with his rare visitors. Despite his blindness, the bard's sharp mind could easily picture the chessboard, and he would call out moves for an *unseen servant* (see area 7) to move the pieces. The onyx and ivory chess pieces (worth 1,000 gp) are stored in a mahogany box on a shelf below the table.

Two tapestries hang on the south wall. One depicts five adventurers (a human male wizard, a human male bard, a helmed knight in blue-banded armor, a bearded dwarf fighter brandishing a bloody axe, and a blonde elf female priest of Tymora) standing proudly over a slain green dragon. This tapestry is labeled "The Blue Griffon Company's Conquest of Wyrmflut." The other tapestry shows a crowd being entertained by several dancers dressed in blue fish costumes with prominent dorsal fins. Its title is "First performance of Gangwolf's 'Water Magic Suite.' "

At the far western end of the room is a grand sight: a huge piano that Gangwolf purchased from a mysterious trader in Woodwind. (The trader imported the instrument from another world via a spelljamming ship.) Due to its uniqueness, the piano is worth 45,000 gp.

Affixed to the west wall is a strange sight: eight black and white ivory keys tuned to the notes of one octave. If someone plays the notes B-G-C (the initials of the Blue Griffon Company) on the small keyboard, a section of wall just south of the keyboard vanishes, revealing a tunnel that leads into blackness and dead-ends at a rock wall. The same three notes played on the matching keyboard found there create an opening leading out to the hillside.

5. Guest Bedroom. This room is furnished with two simple beds, a table, two chairs, a chest, and closet. A backpack, dulcimer, and music box lie on the bed. Affettuosa stays here when she visits, and these items are hers. The music box is exactly like the one the PCs found in the remains of Kamalotus's tower. The backpack holds bird food, berries, vegetable roots, candles, a

tinder box, a week's worth of iron rations, a ball of string, several sheets of music, a journal (recounting plants and animals that Affettuosa has observed), various herbs (a PC with herbalist proficiency will recognize them as healing herbs), and a blanket. A mottled green and brown cloak is the only item hanging in the closet. Affettuosa stores her extra clothes here in the chest: a blue blouse, pastel green trousers, a pastel blue dress, matching boots, and a night shirt. There is no one in the room, and there are no signs of a struggle.

6. Study. The door to this room is carved with the profile of a huge griffon. There are no handles, doorknobs, or other apparent ways to get in. A *knock* spell will open the door, but it is easier to push the eye of the griffon, which causes the portal to swing open.

The comfortable room inside contains a several tables, a desk and chair, and a fireplace flanked by two comfortable armchairs. A magical candle on the mantle is ignited by the sound of fingers snapping three times within 6″ of the candlestick. Only the magical candle can ignite the logs in the fireplace. After burning for 12 hours, the logs and candle go out automatically, although the candle can be extinguished the same way as it was lit. If the candle is extinguished by snapping fingers, the log fire also goes out. The fire of the candle is cool to the touch, and the wax never melts. The everburning logs give off warmth but the wood is never consumed.

Leaning against the fireplace is a finely carved wooden cane about 32″ long and inscribed with notes and treble and bass clefs. The desk chair is not attached to the floor with *sovereign glue*. It slides in and out from the desk on tracks.

The desk has a lip around the edges (½″ on the front and 4″ on the sides and back) to keep items from accidentally falling off. Everything on the desk is in neat piles and seems to have a precise placement. In the drawers are a quill, a pot of ink, a few pieces of parchment, and collections of old letters from friends. (Gangwolf received these before he became blind.) One of the letters seems to have been stuffed awkwardly into the pile. It is the letter from Kamalotus that reminisced about the Rubato elves, and it was here that Octavia learned about the hidden forest. (See "For the Dungeon Master.")

The large table is an untidy mess. Half the table is covered by a map of the area. (The swamp that conceals the Rubatos' forest is circled.) Beneath the map are two books. One is a general treatise on elves, open to a passage about the Seldanqith festival. Another book is a 3″-thick bestiary, open to a passage on korred. A bookmark is inserted at the page that describes harpies.

A small table by the stuffed chairs holds two wine glasses. Here Kamalotus and Gangwolf would relax and have a drink.

The shelves along the south wall contain many books and certificates of achievement for rescuing this maiden or helping that king. Most of the books are about music history, composition, and philosophy. Some of the volumes are signed by their authors, making them collectors' pieces. The value of the entire collection is 25,000 gp. Although blind, Gangwolf was a pack rat and did not want to part with these volumes. He would often ask Kamalotus or Affettuosa to read to him when they visited.

One of the books, entitled "Life and Times Long Ago," has a leather cover embossed with a blue griffon crest. This tome is locked, and nothing will get it open except magical means such as one of the music boxes, a *knock* spell, a *chime of opening*, or the like. This is a journal recounting the adventures of Gangwolf and the rest of the Blue Griffon Company, but it also hides the bard's spellbook.

The last two dozen pages of the book are rather strange. It looks like someone has put raised dots all over them. These dots are a special tactile code that Kamalotus and Gangwolf invented so that the blind bard could "read" his spellbook. Someone unfamiliar with the coded dots must physically feel the pages while casting a *comprehend languages* spell. After that, the PC must make his normal roll to determine whether the spell can be understood.

Gangwolf's spellbook contains: *affect normal fires, armor, audible glamer, burning hands, charm person, find familiar, light, mending, read magic; blur, deep-pockets, fools' gold, forget, knock, levitate, magic mouth, strength, whispering wind; blink, dispel magic, fly, gust of wind, tongues; dig, fire charm, hallucinatory terrain, stoneskin; fabricate, shadow magic, stone shape; legend lore, mislead, move earth, part water.*

7. Kitchen.

> Two candles above a fireplace illuminate what appears to be a kitchen. The large preparation table in the center of the room holds a bowl and spoon, a skull, a rolling pin, and a pair of white gloves. A pile of logs and a large pot are in the unlit fireplace. Water runs down a pipe affixed to the north wall and into a large metal sink. To the south a scarred wooden counter shows much use by the set of carving knives and large fork that hang in a rack on the wall. In front of you, a smaller door probably leads into a pantry.

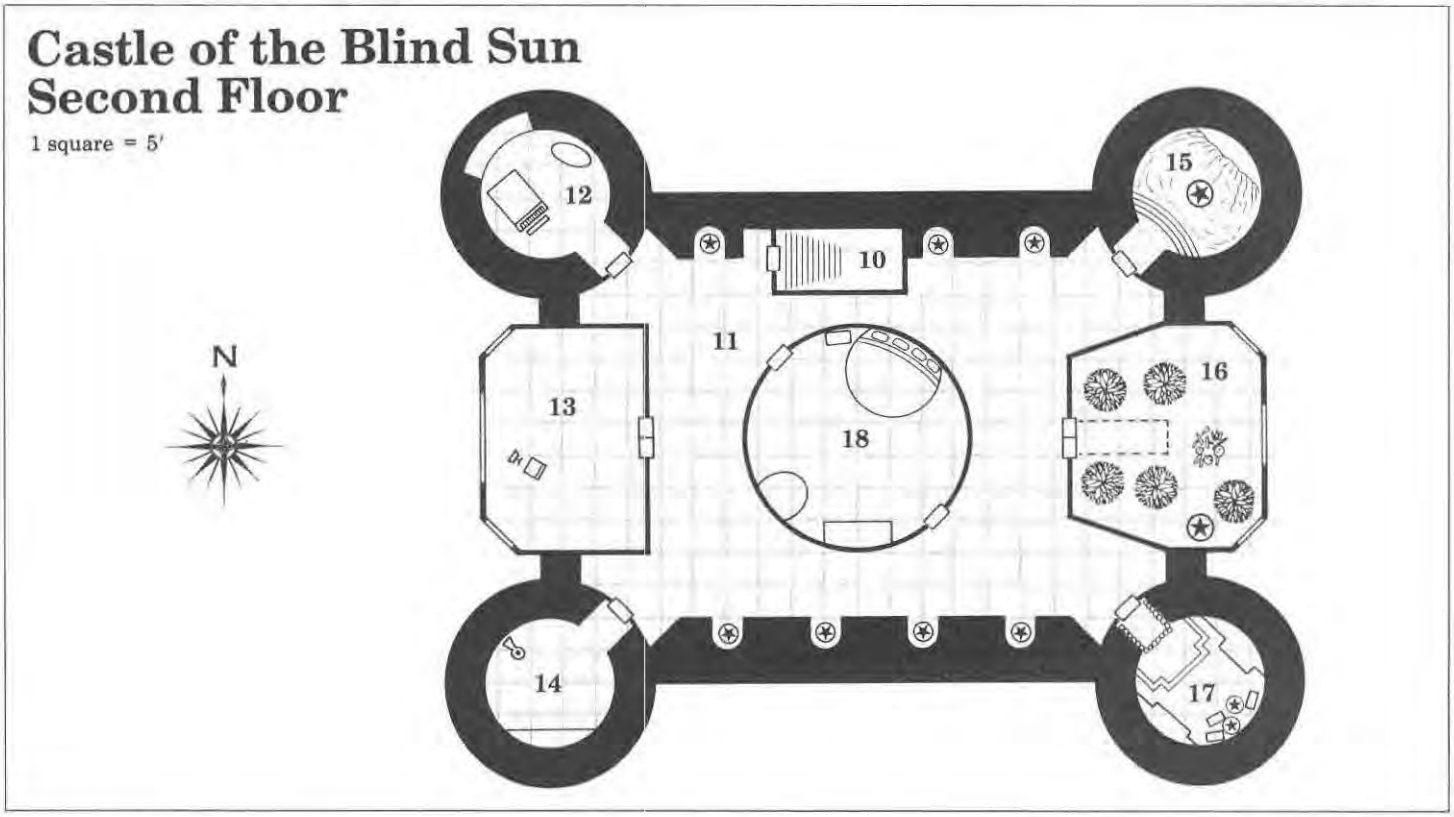
The PCs are free to explore here as much as they want, but nothing interesting happens until someone touches the skull. If handled, the skull exclaims in a nasal voice, "Hey, if you want something cooked, just tell me, but don't touch!"

The skull's name is Brutus, and it is enchanted to cook anything that is available from the pantry (area 8). All one has to say is "Brutus, cook *[name of food]* for *[number of people]*," and the skull starts issuing commands for the recipe. The gloves rise up (they are worn by an *unseen servant*) and hasten to carry out the orders, going to the pantry to get ingredients, cracking eggs, chopping meat, etc. When it is time to cook, Brutus shouts, "Flame on!" and the *everburning logs* in the fireplace ignite under the *pot of even-cooking and nonsticking*. When the dish is done, Brutus yells "Flame off!" to make the logs go out. Brutus knows over 400 recipes. The skull, the magical cookware, and the logs work only in the Castle of the Blind Sun.

After all the cooking is done, the *unseen servant* serves the food and drink on dishes from the cabinets, then whisks the meal out to the dining table in the main hall. When the guests have finished eating, the *unseen servant* opens the music box outside the broom closet (area 9) to activate the cleaning crew.

8. Pantry. The room adjacent to the kitchen contains shelves, barrels, sacks—and one very cold wooden box. Kamalotus cast a permanent *control temperature* spell on the box; inside are eggs, milk, and berries.

A mechanical cat prowls the pantry



and meows when it sees the PCs but is quite harmless. The cat was built to kill mice, spiders, and other vermin that might wander into the area. A PC carrying a rodent or bird familiar must fend off the cat as it tries to crawl up the PC's leg to get at the familiar.

Mechanical cat: INT non; AL N; AC 4; MV 6 (can pounce 5' in a single bound); HD 1−1; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 3; Dmg 1/1/1; SA rake for 1/1 Dmg if both front paws hit; XP 25; New Monster.

The cat will not attack the PCs, as it was created to kill only small animals. If removed from the kitchen area, it will try to get away and wander back. When it gets to the pantry door, it waits patiently for someone to let it back in.

9. Broom Closet. On the wall next to this door is a hinged box on a small shelf. When the box is opened, a tiny mechanical conductor, dressed like a wizard, pops up and waves his wand in time to the music of the box. (Recommended music: *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* by Dukas.) The closet door opens and out come a magical broom, a mop, a dustpan, a pail on wheels, and a four-armed walking-stick man draped with a bandolier loaded with cleaning rags, polish, and cleansers. The crew cleans the kitchen first. The pail lifts to the sink to get water, and the stick man wipes off any spilled flour from the counters and floor. While the stick man dusts and polishes, the broom sweeps, and the mop and pail wash. Dust goes down the sink drain to wash away; larger objects (such as bones) are thrown into the fireplace to be burned. ("Flame on!" shouts Brutus). When the kitchen is spotless, the crew goes to work on any other rooms with open doors. Finally they go marching upstairs to do a thorough cleaning. If the crew gets there, Octavia and Bruno will deduce that intruders are about.

Shutting the music box sends the cleaning crew back into the closet and shuts the door. If the kitchen cleaning has not been finished, Brutus yells, "Hey, you guys! Come back! You're not through." The skull continues to bellow until the crew is allowed to finish its job.

10. Stairway. This 10'-wide wooden stairway has stout iron rails on both sides to assist Gangwolf when going up and down. A door at the top of the second flight of stairs prevents Gangwolf from accidentally falling down the staircase. This door creaks very loudly when opened.

Second Floor

This floor has several unusual rooms with a lot of detail that the DM should review carefully. The DM should thoroughly review the section entitled "The Final Confrontation" (page 69), because there is a good possibility that these events may occur as soon as the PCs reach the second floor. (Remember that the door at the top of the stairs creaks loudly.)

11. Corridors. These 15'-wide corridors are lit by *continual light* globes every 30', for the benefit of Affettuosa and Kamalotus when they visited. The three nooks in the north wall contain life-sized sculptures: a dwarf fighter (labeled "Rostuchuk the Brave"), a female cleric of Tymora (labeled "Figara, Protector of the Faithful"), and a knight in banded armor (labeled "Sir Sebastian, Paladin of the Order of Storm"). These sculptures depict the same people shown in the tapestry on the first floor (area 4). They are deceased members of the Blue Griffon

Company; their statues were commissioned in remembrance of Gangwolf's lost companions. The other four nooks hold larger, more abstract sculptures: free-flowing forms made of different materials, textures, patterns, and shapes. Like most blind people, Gangwolf had a strong kinesthetic appreciation for sculpture and liked to experience the variety of these works of art and the emotions they evoked.

12. Conservatory.

> Here is a comfortable room lit by candles along the walls and a candelabra on a harpsichord—a very rare instrument. Sheet music covers the top of the harpsichord, and spills over onto a nearby table. Bookcases built into the walls hold rolled-up scrolls of musical notation. Two cushioned sofas flank the harpsichord. A set of drums sits on the floor beside a small stool. A glass case recessed into the wall protects a set of silver bells, a hautboy, and a bagpipe. The walls are decorated with other musical instruments and numerous framed documents.

The documents are all certificates of achievement and awards for Gangwolf's many musical accomplishments. Notable among them is a nicely framed music hall bill, dated two years ago, that features Gangwolf as a soloist doing a concerto for the hautboy. Other documents refer to symphonies, sonatas, and one opera ("The Death of Wyrmflut") written by the great bard. The hanging instruments not in the case are of different varieties and are in excellent condition. They would fetch a total of 10,000 gp. The harpsichord by itself could be sold for 15,000 gp.

The sheet music lying on the table is work that Gangwolf previously started and that Octavia has tried to finish, with little success. If anyone looks closely, they can notice the difference in writing. (The earlier notation is Affettuosa's transcription of Gangwolf's tunes.)

Two pages of sheet music atop the harpsichord are quite valuable. One of the sheets is the *lullaby* spell; another is the *arise* spell. Both of these fifth-level spells are detailed in the sidebar on page 52. The PCs or Kelleen must play the *arise* spell to bring the Rubato elves out of their reverie. Inside the music bench is one piece of sheet music entitled "The Blue Griffon Fight Song." (See page 61.) If this tune is played on the harpsichord, the glass case containing two of the elven instruments (the bells and the bagpipes) will open up. Breaking into the glass case any other way activates a *cloudkill* spell. PCs who are not surprised have a chance to escape the room before they are overcome by the toxic vapors.

The bagpipes detect as magical and can be played for up to 24 hours because they are powered by a small *pouch of winds*. (See *Pirates of the Fallen Stars*, page 33, for a description of this item.) If the PCs have difficulty negotiating for the recorder with the korred in area 13, the adventurers will have no problems if they offer to trade the bagpipes. The korred shriek in delight and take the deal quickly before the PCs change their minds.

Neither the bells nor the hautboy are magical. The hautboy was the instrument of Gangwolf's death. Its reed is still intact, and it is still poisoned (save at +1 or die in 1-8 rounds).

This room is acoustically perfect, a musician's dream. PC bards or other musicians will want to spend as much time here as possible, and may need to be reminded of the larger adventure by their colleagues.

13. Sunset Room. PCs listening at the door hear enchanting wild music. (Recommended music: the last six minutes of *Romanian Rhapsody #1* by Enesco.) If they open the door, the adventurers observe the following bizarre sight:

> This room looks and sounds like a dance hall for the insane. Four heavily bearded creatures dance and frolic while playing merrily. One has a drum, another a recorder, a third plays a long stringed instrument, and the fourth has a fiddle. Other instruments lie nearby on the floor. Also dancing wildly are 16 ropelike strands of hair, each a few feet long. Even a stone chair is swinging to and fro in time to the untamed music, its legs tapping the beat and thumping up and down with the rhythm.

This is the lair of the korred chief Twirlur Agitato and his three buddies: Hambone, Bonesnout, and Moe. Octavia heard their wild music in the hills one night and wandered too close. Although she took lots of damage from dancing for 10 straight minutes, she danced quite well and impressed the bearded forest folk.

After she caught her breath, Octavia was able to talk to Twirlur, who understands elvish. She offered him the use of some great new instruments, and a safe place to play them where no one would bother his dancing. All she required of the korred was to let her listen to their music and write down some of their songs. Twirlur and the others were at first suspicious, but the lure of new instruments was too great. What could one human female do?

Octavia kept her word and gave the korred new instruments, including the magical recorder and the long stringed instrument that belonged to the Rubato elves, but she has not enjoyed writing down their works. She has gotten used to their music, so she is not subject to being caught in a dancing frenzy. Even so, once the korred start to play at their frenetic tempo, they won't stop for anything, which makes writing down their music a real headache. Worse yet, they play by instinct and can't tell her the notes they play.

Octavia was planning on eventually feeding the korred to the harpies in area 16 but has yet to figure out a good way to get control of the crazy forest folk, who don't like being disturbed and have uncanny abilities such as turning rock to mud, enchanting strands of hair, and even *teleporting* through the stone walls.

Unless the PCs have magical silence or a bard sings, each PC must save vs. spell or join in the dance with the korred, losing 1-4 hp per round. As the PCs dance, the leather-lunged korred hoot, holler, and stamp their feet.

The PCs may want to fight the bearded creatures, but this is a bad mistake. Each of the 16 dancing ropes can entangle an opponent, and the korred are no slouches when it comes to fighting. If the PCs seem to be getting the better of them, the korred *transmute rock to mud*, forcing each PC to sink to the elbows in thick gray slime. They then use their *stone door* ability to leave the room, and eventually the castle.

Korred (4): INT very; AL CN; AC 5; MV 9; HD 6+1; hp 44, 40 (×2), 29; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2+4, 1d6+4 (cudgels); SA hurl rocks for 2d8 hp, at will; *stone shape, animate rock, stone*

door (*teleport* 30'), *shatter rock, transmute rock to mud, stone tell*; SD laugh (3 times/day; anyone within 60' who hears the laugh must roll Charisma or higher on 1d20 or be stunned for 1-4 rounds); MR 25%; SZ S (3' tall); ML 14; XP 1,400 each; MC.

Korred ropes (16): AC 1; MV 3; hp 5 each; THAC0 15 (same as korred); Dmg person hit must save vs. paralyzation or become *entangled* as per spell.

If the PCs take a more peaceful approach, the korred approach and clap the dancers on their fannies (if human) or backs (if smaller), grin broadly, and speak animatedly in korred. A PC who speaks elvish can talk to Twirlur. The korred are appalled when they hear about Octavia's misdeeds and decide to leave immediately, taking their new instruments with them.

This could be a tough situation for the PCs, who should be focused on getting the Rubatos' instruments back (especially the recorder), but it is not impossible to find a compromise. Close questioning of the korred reveals that they are a scouting party in search of a new home, as their current lair is too close to a new human farming and trading post several days to the west. With some fast talking, the PCs can convince the korred to go with them to the elves' forest, where they will never need to fear the incursion of humans. Then, of course, the PCs must convince the Rubatos to grant the korred some land. This is a future role-playing encounter for the DM to engineer. One thing is certain: The korred like their new instruments and won't give them up without a very good offer.

Although this room was designed as a dance hall, it was never used for this purpose until the korred moved in. Gangwolf came here every evening to enjoy the warmth of the setting sun and play his hautboy. He died here from the poisoned reed that Octavia put in his instrument.

The recorder and long stringed instrument belong to the Rubatos. The recorder looks like an 18"-long hollowed-out reed with 10 holes drilled into it. It is held vertically and played by blowing into the open end while manipulating fingers over the holes to produce the various notes of the scale. The proper song, played on the recorder at midnight on the first and last nights of the Seldanqith festival, creates the illusion of a hideous, smelly bog around the Rubato elves' forest home. The other instruments came from Gangwolf's conservatory (area 12).

14. Lavatory. This circular chamber is almost empty. A square area is curtained off with heavy draperies that hang from the ceiling to the floor. Behind a curtain, a ceramic toilet is affixed to the floor. Any light shining down the hole in the seat reflects back in a shimmering glow, but there is no evidence of a cesspool. The odor of lilacs permeates the room, not the stink usually associated with primitive plumbing.

A gelatinous cube lives far beneath the toilet; it disposes of all organic waste. Every year, this area must be maintained by throwing oil and fire down the waste hole to ensure that the creature doesn't get too big.

Gelatinous cube: INT non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 4; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SA paralyzation, surprise; SD unaffected by electricity, paralyzation, *polymorph,* and mental spells; *slowed* by cold-based attacks; SZ L (10' cube); ML 10; XP 650; MM/278-79.

A counter along the south wall holds a basin and water pitcher. When the cleaning crew (see area 9) tidies this room, the stick man always empties the old water, and the pail obtains fresh water from the waterfall room (area 15).

Lying against the wall, half hidden by the draperies, is a scantily clad woman whose hands and feet are bound with chains. Her hair is very red, and her green eyes look very distant as they try to focus on the PCs.

This is the meistersinger bard Affettuosa, who was captured by Octavia. After refusing to compose for the charlatan, she was drugged, bound, and dumped here. Octavia plans to keep her this way until the next time she feeds the harpies, figuring that Affettuosa may change her mind about writing a few lyrics if the alternative is becoming supper for the harpies. The drugs have wiped out all spells in the captive bard's memory. Only a *neutralize poison* spell, a *heal* spell, or three days of drug-free rest will bring the meistersinger back to reality.

Affettuosa (human meistersinger): AL NG; AC 4 (9); MV 12 (3); B6; hp 36; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 13, D 15, C 13, I 13, W 11, Ch 13. Nonweapon proficiencies: animal lore, craft instrument, direction sense, herbalism, musical instrument (dulcimer), singing, survival. Languages: elvish, dwarvish, gnomish, common. Rogue skills: PP 45%, DN 60%, CW 75%, RL 50%. Affettuosa's current statistics are in parentheses.

Affettuosa is 42 years old, about 5'1" tall, and weighs 132 lbs. She usually wears chain mail, and is proficient with long sword, short composite bow, and spear. Octavia dropped all of Affettuosa's belongings down the lavatory.

Once Affettuosa comes out of her drug-induced stupor, the PCs can find out a lot from her. She is a meistersinger bard who started her adventuring career late in life, after her husband died in an orc invasion. A true friend of nature, she always wants others to give back to the woods more than they have taken. Affettuosa became associated with the Blue Griffon Company on occasional adventures. Although a good friend, she was never a permanent member of the company (she was just too independent). When Gangwolf lost his sight, Affettuosa stopped wandering for a time to help him cope with his new disability. Presently she visits the Castle of the Blind Sun twice a year to tune and repair instruments, transcribe

Gangwolf's latest compositions onto sheet music, join him in impromptu musical sessions, and reminisce about old times.

On Affettuosa's latest visit, she came in through the galeb duhr door, made a quick stop in the guest room (area 5), and was about to go upstairs to find her friend when she almost stepped on Tweeter, Gangwolf's familiar, lying on the floor and barely alive. As Affettuosa was talking to the bird to figure out what was wrong, Octavia came upon her, cast a *hold person* spell, and took her prisoner.

15. Waterfall Room. A PC listening for noises at the door can hear the sound of running water. The room has been enchanted to play peaceful music whenever the door is opened. (Recommended music: *Water Music* by Handel.)

Along the back wall, a waterfall emerges from an opening close to the ceiling and spills all the way down to the first floor. Semicircular steps lead down from the entry door into a 5'-deep pool. In the pool's center is a statue of a bard (a likeness of Gangwolf) playing a hautboy. Water sprays from the instrument in a fine mist.

The water in the pool is magically pumped up through the statue from the fish pond in area 4 below. Water in the pool spills over the edge and back down to the lower level, completing the circuit.

A rack attached to the wall just inside the door holds a set of fluffy towels and bars of scented soap.

Resting in the pool is a beautiful, shapely female with light blue skin, silvery hair, and sparkling royal-blue eyes. This creature is a sirine named Carmina. She lived in a lake far to the west until Octavia flew by and heard her sing. Octavia landed, cast a *charm monster* spell on the sirine, and persuaded her to "audition" for a singing role in one of the bard's major works. Carmina is one of those rare sirines who hungers after companionship, and so was easily persuaded. Thus far, this water creature has been satisfied with the arrangement, and she has provided Octavia with several exotic melodies that the bard intends to claim as her own work.

When the PCs enter, Carmina thinks that Octavia has sent them and looks over the males in the party very critically. She converses freely, trying to determine which of the male PCs is the smartest. When Carmina has figured this out (choose the male PC with the highest combined Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma), she uses her *charm person* ability, batting her long dripping eyelashes innocently, and singing a sweet song. (Recommended music: "L'Amour" solo from Bizet's *Carmen*.)

Carmina has information the PCs can use. She knows that the master of this place is Octavia, who has a "handsome but terribly dumb" boyfriend named Bruno, and that they live in the center room on this level. The sirine can explain a bit of her history and tells the PCs of Octavia's promise to find her "the right man."

If attacked or threatened, Carmina brings forth a *fog cloud*, shouting, "You will just have to die!" This form of *fog cloud* looks like a *cloudkill* spell effect (yellowish-green vapors that move 10' per level away from the sirine). When the PCs' vision has been obscured, she uses her *improved invisibility* spell to escape. If forced to melee, Carmina uses her *short sword of quickness +3, +5 vs. aquatic creatures*. With her free hand, she tries to touch an opponent (save vs. poison or Intelligence is reduced to 2). Once she has taken more than 30 hp damage, she dives into the waterfall, *polymorphing* herself into a fish and emerging in the pool in area 4. She then returns to her normal form and escapes out the front door.

Carmen, sirine: INT high; AL N; AC 3; MV 12, swim 24; HD 7; hp 45; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+3 (short sword); SA song, spell powers, drain Intelligence by touch; SD spell powers, water-breathing; MR 20%; SZ M (5'7" tall); ML 12; XP 5,000; MM/314. Other than her sword, Carmina has no treasure.

16. Sunrise Room. A 3"-diameter hole in the door is plugged with something that smells awful. (It is dried harpy dung.) If the PCs remove the plug, they can peek into the room and not be surprised by the monsters that reside inside. A small keyboard like that in area 4 is attached to the wall beside the door. If the PCs play the notes B-G-C and allow the door to open without first looking through the peephole, they must roll for surprise. The harpies are not surprised, because they can hear the keyboard's notes from inside the aviary.

The DM should play appropriate music as the harpies hurry to see what Octavia has brought them to eat. (Recommended music: "Ride of the Valkyries," from *Die Walkure* by Wagner.) Then the DM must determine which of the PCs fail the saving throw vs. spell against the harpies' *charming* songs.

Harpies (7): INT low; AL CE; AC 7; MV 6, fly 15 (C); HD 7; hp 56, 50 (×3), 48, 43, 35; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA singing and *charm*; SZ M (6'); ML 14; XP 1,400 each; MM/184.

Before Octavia took over, this enormous room was Gangwolf's prized aviary. All his life, the bard had loved the songs of wild birds, and he attracted quite a collection of different types to his home. Each day he would enter in the morning to enjoy the warmth of the sun and the songs of the birds. He was not so cruel as to trap the birds forever inside. The bard provided food, water, and shelter for his winged friends while allowing them to come and go freely through several small enchanted portals that only birds can see.

Once Octavia took control, she found a group of harpies, *charmed* their leader (the 56-hp monster, whose name is Screecher), and brought them back to the castle to sing for her. Although the harpies' music was not accepted by the public, the charlatan figured that these creatures would have their uses. Once the harpies moved in, the normal birds quickly fled.

Now this is a foul-smelling place; it would take the magical cleaning crew (area 9) a full three days to get it sanitary. The room is planted with several scraggly bushes. An enormous willow tree decorated with mucky roosts grows all the way to the 30'-high ceiling. The harp that Octavia stole from the Rubato elves (now somewhat the worse for wear) is hidden in one of the roosts. Octavia gave the harp to the harpies (it seemed an apt choice) to see if they had any instrumental ability. (They don't.)

The temperament of the harpies is just as foul as their lair. It has been some time since they have eaten any meat, and they are getting very hungry. If the largest harpy is killed in battle with the PCs, the others are likely to go after Octavia if she is visible.

At the base of the tree is a statue in the likeness of Gangwolf. In one hand it holds out a large bowl filled with water; in the other is birdseed. The statue is enchanted so that the water and seed are automatically replenished. The sight of birdseed and no meat infuriates

the harpies, so they regularly foul the two bowls.

Scattered around the base of the tree are the bones of the harpies' victims, including those of Gangwolf. (Octavia threw his body in here, and the harpies ate it, even though it was several days old.) If the PCs look closely, they can determine that this is the scene they viewed through the *crystal ball* at Kamalotus's tower.

Among the skeletal remains is a plain wooden cube about 4" square, with a wooden button depressed into a hole on one side. A push releases the button into the up position and clears the picture in the *crystal ball.* Kamalotus gave Gangwolf this device and instructed the bard to press the button if he ever needed help. The box is attuned to Kamalotus's *crystal ball* and rings a chime to attract the wizard. As Gangwolf fell, poisoned by Octavia, he pushed the button. Unfortunately, Kamalotus was already gone, blasted by his own retributive strike.

17. Treasure Room. The DM should read this description carefully, because a lot can happen in this room.

Another keyboard is affixed to the wall outside this room, but its keys are metal, not ivory. When someone presses any note, a permanent *shocking grasp* inflicts 1d8+25 hp damage (save vs. spell for half damage). Moreover, the door does not open. Just to the right of the door, a bass clef is etched into one of the stones. Simultaneously pressing the bass clef's two dots causes the door to open.

Once the door is open, the PCs find what appears to be a tight 3′×3′ cell made of shiny steel bars that crisscross tightly, leaving only 2"×2" square holes to see through. Affixed to the side of this cell is another keyboard of metal keys. The area beyond the cell is illuminated and can be seen by PCs peeking through the bars:

> Beyond the bars you see a wondrous room filled with treasure. Near the back wall stand two magnificently detailed statues, about half life size. One statue is a walking bard and the other is a wizard loaded with adventuring gear. The bard has a hautboy slung over his shoulder and a short sword in one hand. The end of the wizard's staff glows brightly, providing the room's illumination. Bunched around these statues are three large wooden chests. Various items are laid out for display on two long tables covered with red velvet. Each item seems to have a tag of some sort attached to it.

Detecting for magic yields positive results for:

—all the items on the tables

—the reed of the hautboy carried by the bard

—the keyboard

—an area on the ceiling just in front of the statues

—the cell wall facing the statues, and

—a 1′-wide strip on the floor.

A *find traps* spell or thief's ability reveals that the northernmost chest, the area above it, and the foot-wide floor span are all trapped or parts of traps. PCs looking carefully at the floor are entitled to an Intelligence check; successful PCs notice that this 1′-wide strip is the only place in the castle where the floor is not laid in 3′ squares.

Playing B-G-C on the keyboard (no *shocking grasp* this time, but let the PCs worry that there might be) or using the music box causes the inside wall of the cage to lift like a portcullis, allowing the PCs to go right in and look at everything in the room.

Each item on the tables is tagged with a hard but pliable material that is tightly attached by one corner. The tag cannot be cut or burned off, nor will a *knock* spell get one off. An attempt to bend bars at one-third the normal chance will break a tag, but failure to get it off this way actually strengthens the tag (−5% to the next PC who tries to remove it). An inspired PC can remove the hautboy reed on the statue and touch it to a tag, causing the tag to release itself from the item.

Magical items are unusable until their tags are removed, and the tags guard against intruders taking away treasure. Anyone crossing the 1′-wide area of enchanted stones with a tagged item causes the cage entry to suddenly slam down with a clang, trapping the PC inside (3d6 hp damage to anyone standing under the bars). PCs who were clever enough to prop open the gate with something large can walk right out.

If the PCs did not take this precaution, there are a few other ways to get out. Pressing the notes B-G-C on the keyboard will not open the gate again until an hour from the last time those notes were played. Further, it will be extremely difficult to reach the keyboard through the tightly woven bars. (The keys are just out of finger reach.) Patient PCs may wait out the hour and use something like a wand, a stiletto, or an *unseen servant* to press the keyboard. A clever PC with musical instrument proficiency may think to play the notes B-G-C on her instrument. This opens the gate with no waiting period. A *knock* spell will not open the gate because it is like a portcullis. (See *PH*, page 143.) Strong PCs may use their bend bars/lift gates ability at a 15% penalty. Because the cell is so small, only one PC at a time can attempt to lift the gate.

PCs who manage to sneak past Octavia will probably not want to wait very long to escape, because she will certainly become aware of them soon. The instant the trap is triggered, *magic mouths* appear in Adagio's and Gangwolf's rooms (areas 2 and 18). The mouths sing in fine baritone voices, "Intruders in the treasure room! Intruders in the treasure room!"

When Octavia arrives to see what the problem is, she orders the PCs to surrender. If any PC is obviously a bard or carries a musical instrument, she demands that PC create a song for her. If he refuses, she tries to *charm* him. Failing that, she casts harmful spells until

Field Pavilion

This magical object appears to be a 1" thick, 1′×1′ square of tough green cloth with a cord hanging out one corner. When the cord is pulled and the cloth is tossed to the ground, the item expands into a pavilion-sized tent (30′ diameter) equipped with four cots, bedrolls, and a meal set out on a table, with place settings for four people. To fold up the *field pavilion,* a command word must be uttered (something unlikely to be said inside a tent). People or other creatures inside the tent when the command word is said must make a Dexterity check to escape, or suffocate in 1-4 rounds. The tent cloth is waterproof and provides protection against dust storms but offers no extra protection against heat or cold. It is also vulnerable to weapons, claws, and other sharp objects. If the cloth is torn, the tent will not refold until a *mending* spell is cast on the damaged area.

the adventurers agree to make music for her. If her spells are not enough, she returns to her bedroom (area 18) to rest and relearn spells before she tries again. Eventually, she can wear down the PCs; if they retaliate, she leaves them alone to starve.

If the PCs come up with an original song that pleases Octavia, she allows them one meal a day as long as they continue to produce music. All the while, Bruno stands guard outside the door, accompanied by Adagio (if he is still around), who awaits orders from Gangwolf or Octavia. The butler golem does not allow anyone to leave the room and fights to the death.

This is the only room that Octavia has not been able to loot in the entire castle. After the charlatan killed Gangwolf, she came here and tried everything she knew to get the tags off the items, but nothing worked. As soon as she crossed the foot-wide enchanted strip, she was caught. Fortunately, she had her lute with her and played the proper notes to get out before Adagio arrived.

The items on the southern table include a *ring of three wishes*, a *dagger +1*, a *ring of earth elemental command*, a *ring of protection +2*, *bracers of defense AC 3*, a pouch of *dust of illusion* (12 pinches), and a *figurine of wondrous power* (a blue griffon, of course, usable once a week, with statistics the same as Kentor's). The items on the northern table include a bundle of eight *arrows +3*, a bundle of six *crossbow bolts +2*, a *gem of seeing*, a *horn of valor* (*Tome of Magic*, page 138), a *field pavilion* (see sidebar), a *dwarven two-handed axe +2*, and three *healing bandages* (affix to wound to cure 2-12 hp, one use only). The *ring of three wishes* was brought here by Affettuosa on her previous visit. She suspected that it was magical, so she left it here for Kamalotus to *identify*.

The chests are all affixed to the floor with *sovereign glue*. The southernmost chest contains 50,000 gp sorted into sacks of 100 gp each. The center chest holds 48,000 gp worth of treasure sorted into sacks of 100 pp (20 sacks), 100 gp (100 sacks), and gems (seven sacks worth 4,000 gp each). The sacks in these chests are tagged like the magical items; while the tag is affixed to the sack, the cloth cannot be cut, torn, burned, etc.

The northernmost chest is trapped. Opening it up causes a *cone of cold* to come from the ceiling, blasting everyone within 10' of the chest for 1d4+25 hp damage (save vs. spell for half damage). There is nothing inside the chest.

18. Gangwolf's Bedroom. Each of the two doors to this room has a 2"-diameter hole at eye level. These now serve as peepholes but were originally installed to allow Gangwolf's nightingale familiar, Tweeter, to get in and out.

Inside this circular area is an enormous fur-covered bed (value of furs 1,000 gp). Installed on the headboard is a single large button with an engraved letter A. Pressing the letter causes the cuckoo clock in area 2 to sound off, summoning Adagio upstairs to see what is needed.

Other features of the room include a closet, bench, and bird perch. In the closet, several robes have been shoved into a corner, displaced by Octavia's clothing on the hanging racks and hooks. One of Gangwolf's possessions that Octavia threw aside is a *cloak of many pockets*. The pockets contain spending money (100 gp), three days' iron rations, spell components, birdseed, hautboy reeds, a potion of *healing*, a jar with one application of *Keoghtom's ointment*, and other odds and ends.

On the bench are three wig stands holding blonde, brunette, and red-haired wigs. Next to the stands is a makeup kit that Octavia uses to disguise herself. Under the false bottom of the kit is the charlatan's spellbook, which contains the spells listed in Octavia's description in "The Final Encounter" plus the following: *comprehend languages, enlarge, feather fall, light, mending, Nystul's magical aura; fog cloud; knock, levitate, mirror image, web, wizard lock; delude, dispel magic, hold undead, tongues; illusionary wall, polymorph self; lullaby/arise* (new spell), *passwall, stone shape; true seeing*.

The bird perch was for Tweeter, Gangwolf's nightingale familiar, whom Octavia killed.

When she captured Affettuosa, the charlatan bard removed the meistersinger's belongings and stuffed them under the bed. A PC who pokes around in the dark recesses under the bed can find a *long sword +1*, a short composite bow, a spear, a quiver with 20 flight arrows (10 of which are *arrows +2*), and a *short sword +2* (that belonged to Gangwolf).

Tucked beneath this pile of weaponry is Affettuosa's spellbook, which contains: *change self, charm person, enlarge, feather fall, magic missile, sleep; fog cloud, invisibility, levitate, knock, silence 15' radius* (see *CBH*, page 75), *wizard lock; hold person*.

The Final Confrontation

The final encounter with Octavia should be something bards will sing about in future years. The exact features of this battle rest with the DM, but probable events are suggested in the following paragraphs.

Octavia will be aided by her muscular mercenary lover, Bruno. This man is the wandering bounty hunter who did not return to Woodwind from the foothills of the Northern Barrier Mountains. Octavia noticed him as he disposed of a patrol of five orcs. Impressed by his fighting abilities and his rugged good looks, Octavia flew down on her broom and offered him a job as her bodyguard. At first, Bruno resisted, but the charlatan's alluring appearance—assisted by a *charm person* spell—changed his mind quickly.

Bruno is just as evil as Octavia, and the two make a fine—and deadly—couple, although Octavia would not hesitate to ditch him in a second if it meant her skin. Bruno, on the other hand, is hopelessly in love with Octavia and will fight to the death for her. If Bruno is reduced to fewer than 30 hp, however, a successful *dispel magic* spell breaks Octavia's *charm* and causes him to surrender.

Bruno, mercenary fighter: AL CE; AC −2; MV 12; F9; hp 84; THAC0 12 (not adjusted); #AT 2/1 (specialized in two-handed sword) or 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 18/04 (+1 to hit, +3 damage), D 16, C 17, I 12, W 11, Ch 15; ML 17 (due to *charm*); XP 5,000; *bracers of defense AC 2, ring of protection +2*.

Bruno is armed with Glorsky, a *two-handed sword +2* (totals of +4 to hit, +7 damage). Glorsky is chaotic evil in alignment and inflicts 2-8 hp damage on any non-evil person who handles it. The sword also gives its owner the ability to conjure 3-6 *mirror images* of himself once a day. Bruno also owns two stilettos (one in each boot), a *throwing axe +1*, and a spear with a silver head.

Even though Bruno is tremendously powerful, Octavia the charlatan bard is the real threat to the PCs. Her deceptive cuteness (5' tall, 110 lbs., silky black hair, dark brown eyes, 15 Cha-

risma) may lull the PCs into thinking that she is not very dangerous. Octavia can alter her looks significantly through magic or by using wigs, makeup, and artificial appendages. She can look like an alluring blonde, brunette, or red-haired hussy, or can disguise herself to look like an old hag with a long nose and a face full of hairy warts.

When not disguised, Octavia wears a fine purple leather tunic over a red skirt and yellow blouse. Outdoors, she wears a cloak that conceals her weapons. As a high-level adventurer who has rooked many others out of their precious belongings, she has a number of fine magical items: *bracers of defense AC 6*, two *daggers +2*, *boots of elvenkind*, a *ring of fire resistance*, a *ring of spell turning*, a *chime of interruption*, *eyes of true seeing*, *pipes of haunting*, and a *portable hole*. As a bard, she can also use any written clerical or wizard magical item with a 15% chance of error.

Octavia is true to her neutral-evil alignment in every way; she always looks out for "number one"; no one else counts. Even those who believe they are her good friends would be left behind or used as a shield if danger appeared. She delights in tricking people out of their money. If conning them doesn't work, she won't hesitate to use violence. But she is never satisfied. The elusive "big con" always waits to be planned and executed. Even her conquest of the Castle of the Blind Sun has been satisfying for only a short while.

Octavia, human charlatan: AL NE; AC 4; MV 12; B15; hp 56; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 8, D 16, C 9, I 15, W12, Ch 15; ML 20; XP 10,000; possessions as detailed above.

Weapon proficiencies: dagger, footman's mace, short sword, dart, long sword. Nonweapon proficiencies: gaming, acting, disguise, forgery, singing, musical instrument (lute), healing. Languages: common, elvish, dwarvish gnomish. Rogue skills: PP 88%, DN 76%, CW 82%, RL 85%.

Spells: *change self, charm person, magic missile; alter self, fools' gold, invisibility; hold person, monster summoning I, suggestion; charm monster, monster summoning II, polymorph other; cone of cold, fabricate.*

If the PCs do not take precautions against the loudly creaking door at the top of the stairs, Octavia will certainly be alerted to their presence. She goes to the peephole of the bedroom door (area 18), sees the PCs (including *invisible* PCs, with her *eyes of true seeing*), and casts an *invisibility* spell on herself. She instructs Bruno to stand ready by the door with his stiletto. When a PC looks into the peephole, Octavia moves back and says, "Now, Bruno." This is the mercenary's cue to plunge his stiletto through the peephole.

The unfortunate PC on the other side has a small chance to avoid being blinded. First, he must roll for surprise with a −1 modifier to his die roll. If the PC is not surprised, he and Bruno roll initiative. If the PC wins the initiative, he hears Octavia give her order and has the opportunity to take one quick action. (Jumping away from the door is the best course.) If Bruno has the initiative, he attacks vs. AC 10 and misses only on a roll of a natural 1. A hit not only blinds the PC but requires a system shock roll to avoid passing out for 1d4 +4 rounds. Bruno then has Glorsky conjure *mirror images*, and he charges out to hack the intruders to death.

Meanwhile, Octavia (still *invisible*, as she took no offensive action) leaves through the other door of area 18, walks to area 16, and plays B-G-C on the keyboard there, opening the door. The notes attract the harpies, who fly into the ruckus, delighted to find such a fine assortment of meat. The DM should randomly determine the harpies' targets; they are just as likely to go after Bruno and the *mirror images* as they are to attack the PCs. Bruno must save vs. the harpies' singing unless a PC bard negates the effect.

Octavia then works her way (still *invisible*) into area 15 and peeks out the door to see how the battle is going. Each PC can make an Intelligence check with a −10 penalty (due to the singing of the harpies and noise of battle) to notice that the door to that room was opened.

If the PCs are having a hard time, Octavia ventures forth to use her *chime of interruption* against spellcasters. She casts a *polymorph other* spell to turn one PC into a crow, then casts a *hold person* spell on whoever is giving Bruno the toughest time. Octavia will try to use her *monster summoning II* spell to conjure 1-6 gnolls to attack the PCs from the rear, then a *monster summoning I* spell to conjure 2-8 orcs to help out.

Gnolls (1-6): INT low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 2; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SZ L (7½' tall); ML n/a; XP 35; MM/158.

Orcs (2-8): INT average; AL LE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 1; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ M (6' tall); ML n/a; XP 15; MM/281.

If the PCs are getting the better of Bruno and the harpies, Octavia returns to area 15, tells Carmina the sirine what has happened, and asks the creature to back up her next plan. If Bruno is about to surrender, Octavia conjures the gnolls and orcs behind him to kill him, so that he doesn't mess up her story.

When the PCs approach the waterfall room (area 15), Octavia casts her *change self* spell, becoming visible and taking on the appearance of an elderly cleaning lady. She greets the adventurers warmly and expresses her gratitude to the PCs for rescuing her from "that terrible man who took over the castle of kind old Gangwolf." She tells the PCs that Bruno was keeping a beautiful water lady captive and was mistreating her. The sirine will confirm this tale.

If the PCs ask Octavia who she is and what she is doing in the castle, she claims to be Melba, cleaning lady for Master Gangwolf, whom the evil man killed and threw to the harpies. She tells the PCs that Bruno was a warlock who had the power to change himself into a woman at will.

PCs who have been paying attention should see through the lying charlatan's tale, because there are several holes in her story:

—If Bruno was a warlock, why didn't he cast any spells, and why did he attack like a seasoned warrior?

—Why would Gangwolf need a cleaning lady if he had the magical cleaners downstairs?

—How come no one has seen this fellow in male form until just now?

The jig will really be up if the PCs confront "Melba" with Adagio. The flesh golem butler will, of course, insist he has never seen her before. If the PCs search Melba, they find her laden with magical items, including the third music box.

If the PCs see through the ruse, Octavia tries to *charm* the male with the highest Charisma. If necessary, she blasts the PCs with her *cone of cold*, *magic missile*, and any other unused spells. The sirine reacts to the PCs' attack as described in area 15. Octavia,

however, fights to the bitter end. She knows that if she surrenders, swift justice in Woodwind awaits her.

Concluding the Adventure

If Octavia is captured alive and taken to Woodwind, she is found guilty of murder, fraud, and kidnapping. As she stands beneath the gallows, awaiting execution, she loudly curses the PCs, promising to come back from her grave to haunt them forever.

The adventure will end successfully if the PCs recover all the elven instruments, find the *arise* spell, and return to the forest to bring the wood elves out of their reverie. Generous-hearted PCs may use the *ring of three wishes* from the treasure room to restore Kentor to his original mind (and body, if they didn't do so in the first place). Kelleen will be grateful beyond words that her love has been restored. Getting a result close to this should earn the PCs a story award of 50,000 XP.

There are, however, still a few loose ends to tie up. If the PCs promised the korred that they could relocate to the Rubatos' forest, the adventurers must do some fast talking with the wood elves. Although the elves are grateful to the PCs for the rescue, they are leery of korred and want to limit where the korred may go and what they may do. The korred want nothing to do with anything that restricts their chaotic nature. The PCs may have to mediate between the two groups to reach a reasonable accommodation. At the least, the elves insist on the korred staying far away when the bearded folk do their dancing. The DM should make this a role-playing challenge.

The telling argument in favor of the elves sharing their forest is that it will be another five years before the next Seldanqith festival. Recreating the illusion of the bog will have to wait until then (although the PCs could *wish* it back with the ring). In the meantime, all manner of humankind will settle in the forest, cutting timber and hunting the animals, so the elves will have their hands full. If crazy korred are scampering around in the forest, playing their wild and wooly music, no settlers will want to come near.

A priest PC could go among the bones of the harpies' victims seeking out the remains of Gangwolf, using *speak with dead* or similar spells. The remains are so scattered that a *raise dead* spell will not work (see *PH,* page 224), but a *resurrection* spell might. In this instance, there is only a 50% chance for success because of the scarcity of remains. If this roll is made, then a second percentile roll for resurrection survival must be made. Gangwolf, who had a Constitution of 12, will survive on a roll of 85 or less. PCs attempting this to resurrect Gangwolf should receive a 30,000-XP bonus, whether they succeed or not.

The bones of two other bards also rest in the aviary. The DM should roll up statistics for them if resurrected. The bards will become loyal NPC henchmen. Of course, bringing the dead back to life is yet another opportunity for the PCs to use up a *wish* from the ring (one deceased per *wish*).

If Gangwolf survives resurrection, he is dismayed at the demise of Kamalotus but is grateful for the PCs' intervention. He allows the PCs to keep Kamalotus's music box for entry into the Castle of the Blind Sun whenever they desire, and offers each PC an item from the treasure room plus 15,000 gp for the party. Finally, the blind bard insists on being taken to Woodwind, where he makes out a deed granting Affettuosa the right to live on his property for the rest of her life. Her adventuring days are close to an end, and as long as there is a place for her pets, she is happy to stay.

If Gangwolf does not survive, the PCs may want to keep the castle for themselves, using it as a base of operations for further adventures. It is a perfect hiding place . . . well, perfect until a particularly greedy dragon (perhaps an offspring of Wyrmflut) sees a PC entering with the galeb duhr and decides to investigate. Ω

Thanks to Our Playtesters for Issue #49

"Castle of the Blind Sun": Ted James Thomas Zuvich, Jon Cummings, Todd Cushman, Terrace Jerome, Ian Jirka, Dave Lubash, Bob Newell, Doug Schilling, and Eilidh Zuvich.

"North of Narborel": Paul Culotta, Shari Culotta, Mike McIntyre, Norajane McIntyre, Glenn McIntyre, Danny Eckelt, Adam McIntyre, and Todd Baughman.

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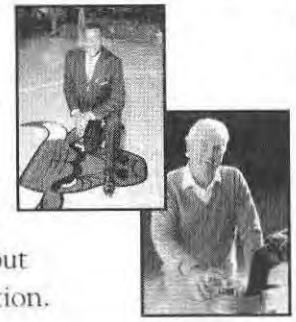

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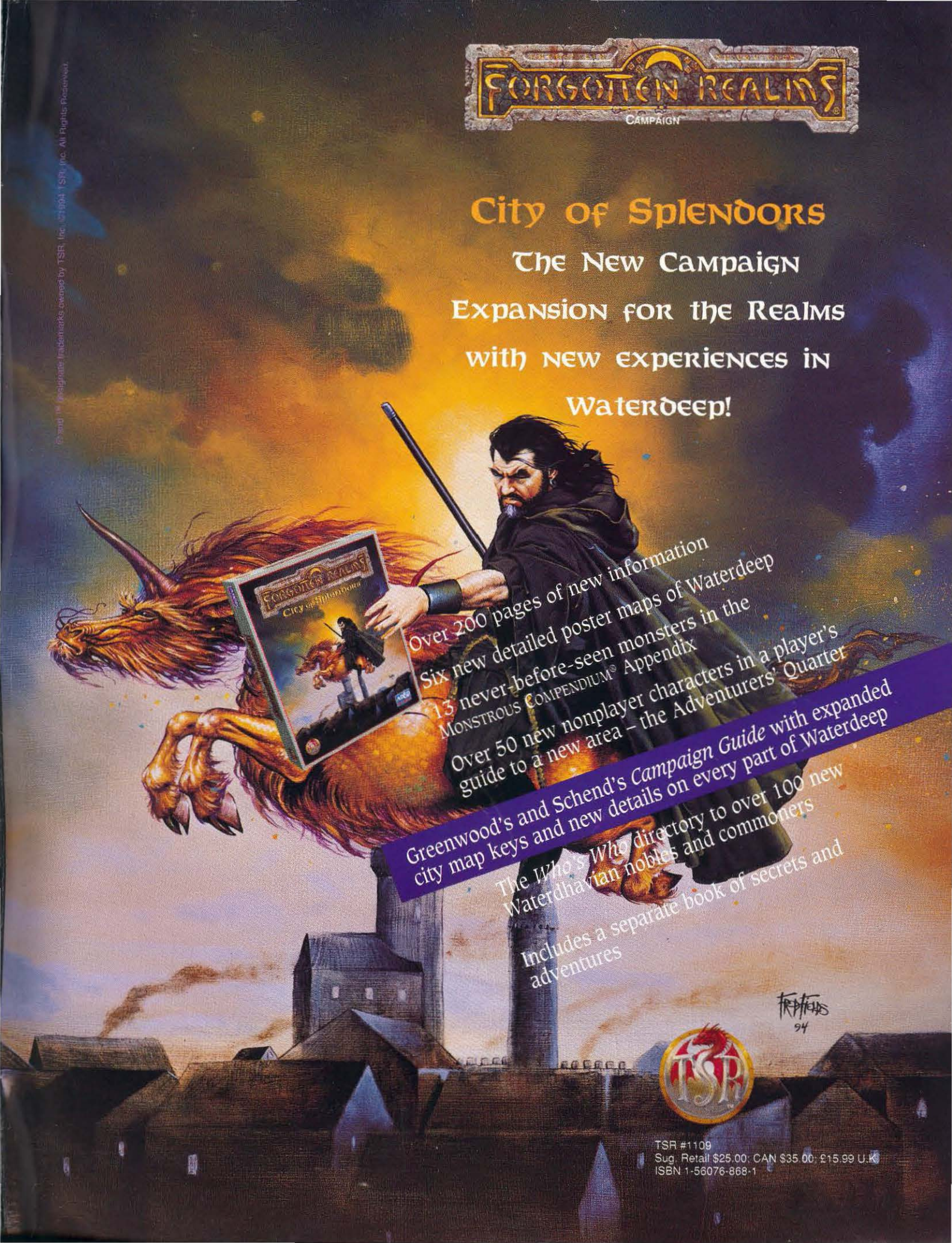
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